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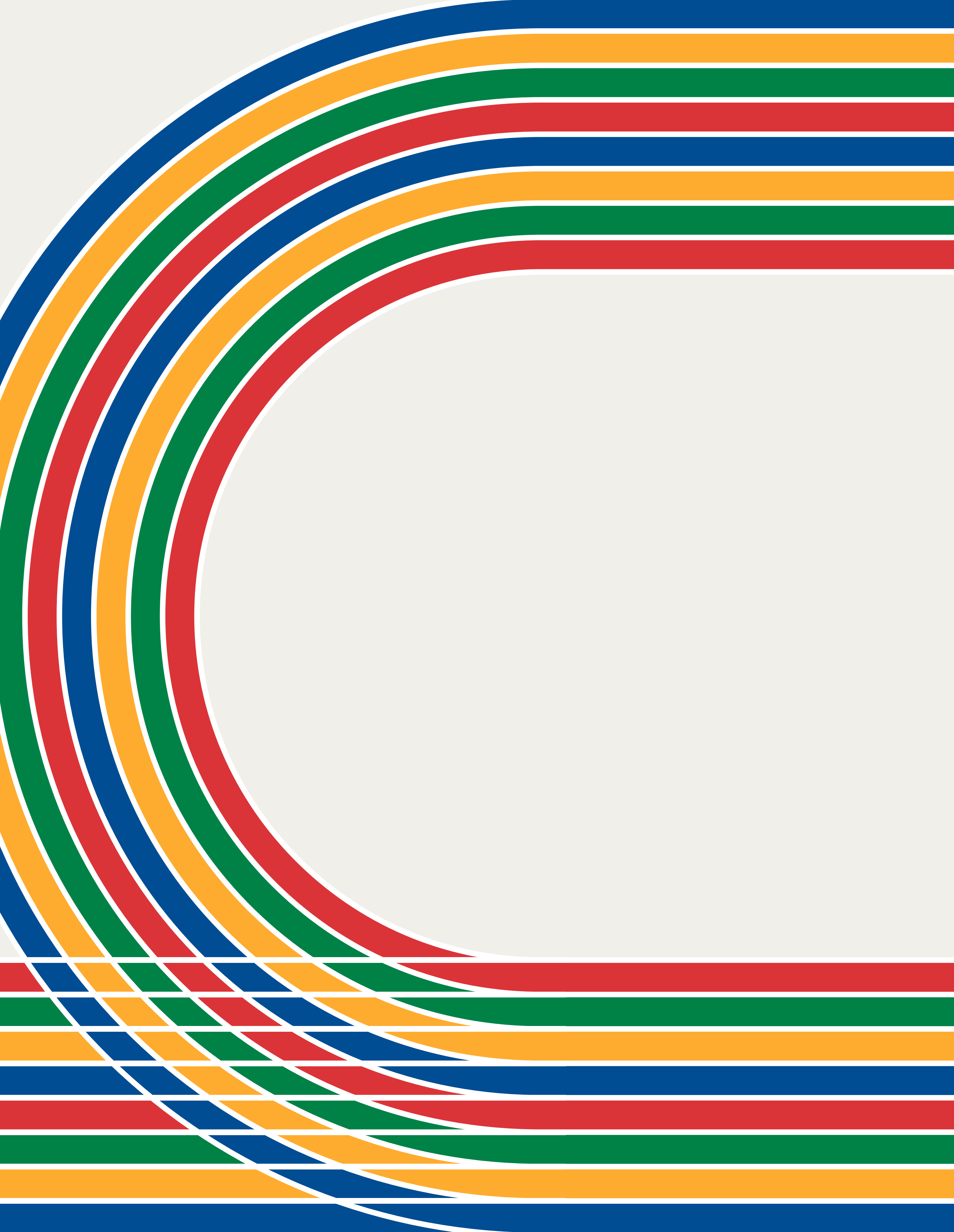

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HISTORY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

It's been called the greatest show on Earth, and that's not far from the truth. Every four years, the world comes together to watch the best of the best compete for gold, silver, bronze and glory. It's a spectacle filled with fire, spirit and national pride. It's the Olympic Games.

Now you can chart the entire history of the Olympics, from its earliest days in Ancient Greece all the way to the postponed Tokyo Games. Uncover the real reason the Romans did away with the competition, and meet the Frenchman who brought it back in 1896. Find out about the Olympics-inspired competitions like the Special Olympics and head around the world to see the birth of the Paralympics and Winter Olympics.

But it's not all glory and riches. We reveal the truth behind controversies like the Russian doping scandal, and explain why some cities end up in crippling debt after hosting the sporting event.

Everything you ever wanted to know about the history of the Olympic Games is just over the page...

HISTORY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

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Cover images
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Advertising
Media packs are available on request
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Printed in the UK

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

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History of the Olympic Games Second Edition (AHB4398)
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Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

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ALL ABOUT HISTORY
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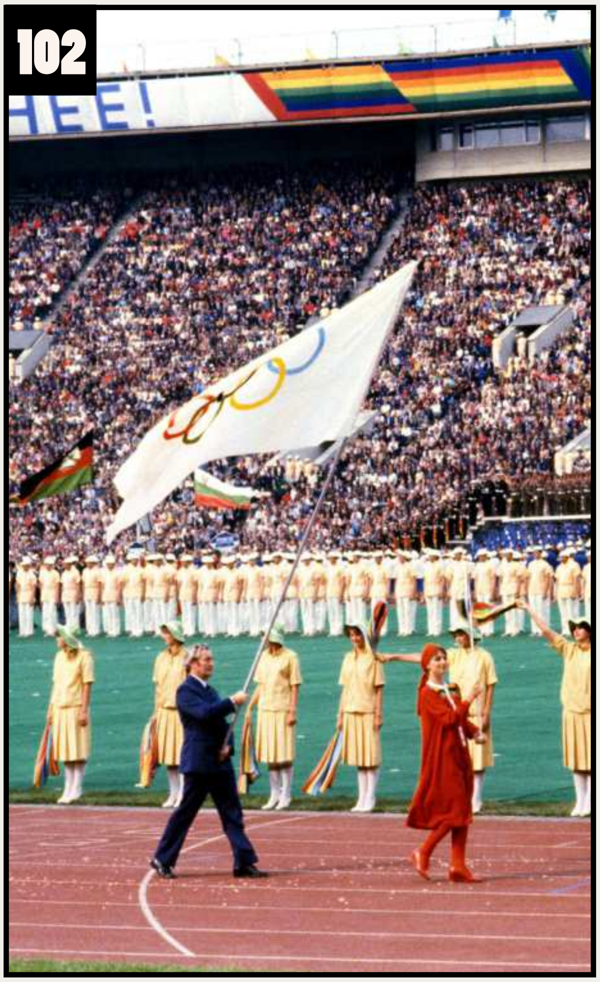
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The Ancient Olympics

The origins of these spirited events revealed

Words David Stuttard

Every four years from 776 BCE to around 425, competitors and spectators flocked to a sanctuary in southern Greece to participate in one of the most extraordinary events of the ancient world. It was a festival in honour of Zeus, king of the gods, who ruled from the snow-capped peaks of Mount Olympus far to the north. Indeed, it was from Olympian Zeus that the location of the sanctuary was named: Olympia.

The festival had humble origins. In its early years, participants came mainly from Elis, the city just under 65 kilometres away that controlled the sanctuary. On the morning following the August full moon, they sang hymns, chanted prayers, and sacrificed oxen to Zeus, burning the bones and fat on the altar as an offering before cooking the meat for that evening's banquet.

As the mouth-watering aromas filled the air, many of those present made their way a little to the east, stripped down to their loincloths – only from 720 BCE were competitors naked – and, while the rest looked on, raced back to the finishing line near the altar. The distance, around 180 metres, was called in Greek a 'stade', the origin of our word 'stadium'. In 30 seconds the race was over, and in 776 BCE the winner was proclaimed. He was a local baker called Coroebus, that year's only victor, for the foot race was the only contest. The Olympic Games began as one Olympic game.

So it remained for two generations, but from 724 BCE other events were introduced, and the reputation of the festival began to spread. Coincidentally, this was a time of new beginnings for the Greeks, as many mainland cities sent shiploads of citizens to plant new settlements in foreign lands from Marseilles in the west to Byzantium in the east, and from Cyrene in Libya to Epidamnus in modern Albania.

As Greek territory expanded, Greeks felt a growing need to maintain, or create, a cultural identity. The 5th-century-BCE historian Herodotus writes that what united them was "kinship in blood and speech, the shrines of gods, the sacrifices that we have in common, and the similarity of our lifestyle". He might have added 'competitiveness', because inspiring almost every Greek was the advice given to Achilles in the *Iliad*, an epic poem with its roots in the 8th century BCE: "Always to be best and to surpass all others".

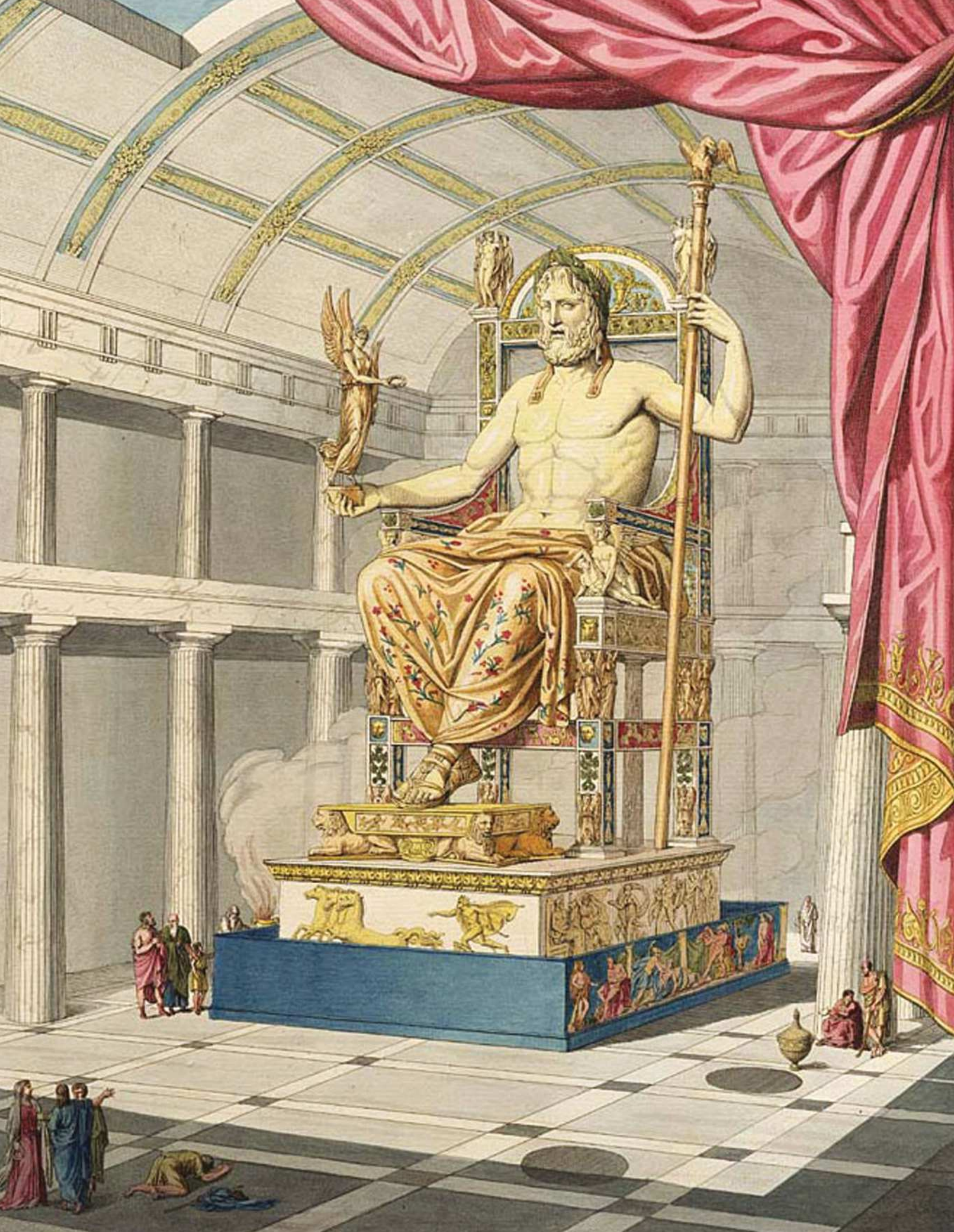
As the *Iliad*, with its tales of bravery culminating in funeral games for Patroclus, was fuelling the Greeks' imagination, the setting where they could locate themselves as the true heirs of the heroes of the Trojan War was fast becoming recognised as Olympia and, although other sports-related festivals sprang up – notably at Delphi, Corinth and Nemea – the Olympics reigned supreme. By the 6th century BCE, competitors were arriving at Olympia from all over the Greek world and, when in the early 5th century mainland Greeks successfully fought off the Persian invasions while Sicilian Greeks defeated the Carthaginians and Etruscans, it was at Olympia that they made offerings of thanks.

As the festival's status grew, the Games expanded to cover five days. At the same time, new opportunities to display power through sacrifice and banquets meant that Olympia was now attracting not just athletes but the rich and influential as well as kings and politicians eager to strut the international stage, hold high-level conferences and negotiate high-profile deals.

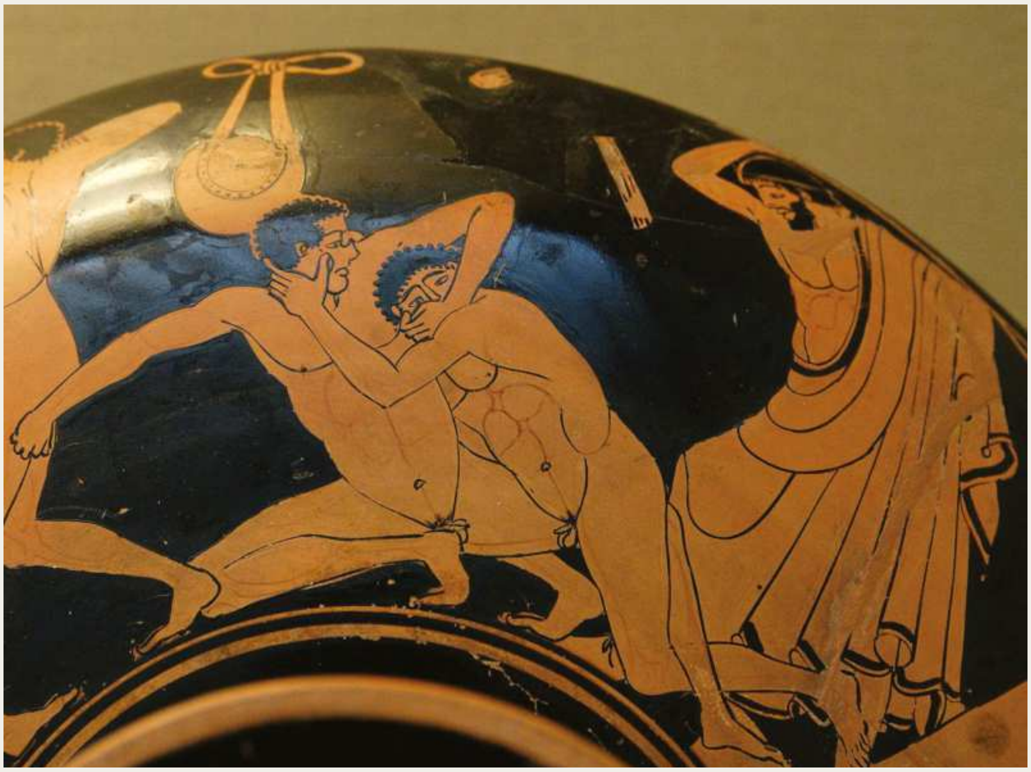
Many were keen to compete in the chariot race, the Games' most expensive event. Among them was Alexander I, king of Macedon, whose people many considered not to be pure Greeks. In 504 BCE, he successfully proved his eligibility by tracing his ancestors back to the Peloponnesian city of Argos.

Almost a century later, in 416 BCE, the Athenian playboy politician Alcibiades also used the Olympic chariot race to proclaim his wealth and power by entering an unrivalled seven teams.

RIGHT **Quatremère de Quincy's 1815 reconstruction of Pheidias' statue of Olympian Zeus wrongly imagines it beneath an arched roof**



BELOW Devotees of the most brutal of sport, pancratists break the rules forbidding biting and eye-gouging



Unsurprisingly he won, and to celebrate he entertained the spectators to a banquet, paid for in part by his wealthy backers from the Aegean islands of Chios and Lesbos.

Meanwhile, as the numbers of attendees swelled, others were attracted, too. It wasn't just merchants hoping to make valuable sales, but writers such as Herodotus, who read his *Histories* from the portico of Zeus' temple; artists such as Zeuxis, the inventor of trompe l'œil, who wafted round Olympia in a cloak advertising his name in golden letters; and poets like the praise-singer Pindar, who was eager to win commissions from victorious athletes.

But while people like the far-seeing orator Isocrates used the panhellenic gathering to make heartfelt pleas for Greek unity in the face of strong aggressors, they fell on deaf ears. At the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BCE, Philip II of Macedon defeated the mainland Greek states and marked his victory by erecting his 'Philippeion' – a round temple containing statues of himself and his family – at Olympia next to the Temple of Hera, wife of Zeus.

Under the Roman Empire, the Olympics continued to thrive, though occasionally an emperor might bend the rules. In 67 CE, Nero not only rescheduled the Games to allow him to take part, he also tried to show his prowess by driving his own ten-horse chariot. But nothing went to plan. His biographer Suetonius records: "He fell from his chariot and was helped back in, but he could not continue and gave up before the end. Even so, he won the victor's crown."

At last Christianity put paid to the Olympic Festival. After all, it was in honour of a pagan god. Outlawed in 391 by the Christian emperor Theodosius, the Olympics struggled on for another 30 years, but by 425 the Games were no more.

All classical accounts of the Olympics' origins involved mythology. Some maintained that it was at Olympia that Zeus defeated his father, Cronus, and assumed control of gods and mortals. Others claimed that Heracles established the first Games to celebrate his victory over the local king, Augeas, who had refused to pay the hero for one of his 12 labours, cleansing the royal stables.

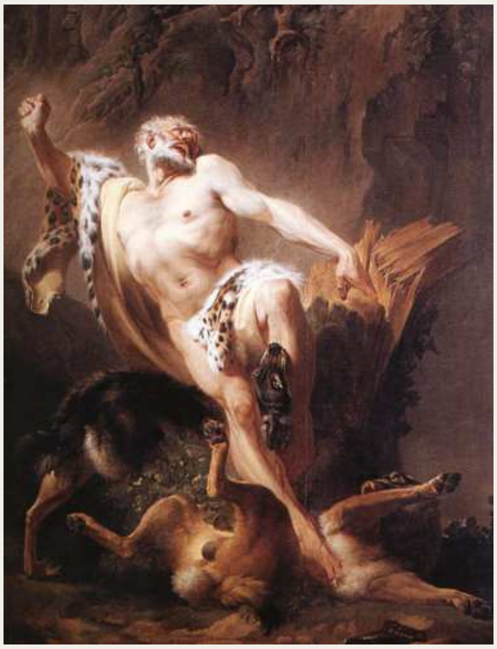
> "Olympia was now attracting not just athletes but the rich and influential"

Still others disagreed. For them, the founder of the Games was Pelops, an Ionian prince from Phocaea (modern Foça in Turkey). Learning that the wealthy Greek king Oenomaeus was offering his daughter, Hippodamia, in marriage to whomever beat him in a chariot race, Pelops was determined to win. Even though he possessed a team of magical horses, a gift from the god Poseidon, he took no chances. He bribed the chariot technician, Myrtilus, to remove the lynch pins from Oenomaeus' wheels and substitute them with wax replicas. As the wheels rotated ever faster, the friction made these lynch pins melt; the chariot collapsed and Oenomaeus was dragged to an excruciating death. However, instead of honouring his side of the agreement (to let Myrtilus sleep with Hippodamia), Pelops threw him off a cliff. But Myrtilus' ghost haunted Pelops, and the only way he could appease it was by performing funeral games – the first-ever Olympic Games.

The influence of all three foundation myths were felt at Olympia. Dominating the Altis was a magnificent Temple of Zeus, within whose incense-laden inner chamber was a stunning statue of the seated god wearing the olive crown, awarded to victorious athletes. Created in a specially built onsite workshop by the Athenian sculptor Pheidias, it was 12 metres high and faced in gold and ivory, the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World located on Greek soil. Such was its numinous beauty that even the 2nd-century-CE Stoic philosopher Epictetus enthused that "people would consider it a great misfortune to die without ever seeing it". Transported to Constantinople by rapacious Romans, the statue was destroyed by fire in 462, but we can still appreciate its power: Byzantine iconographers used it as their model for the face of God.

Meanwhile, a stone's throw from Zeus' temple to the north, Pelops' grave-mound was the site of one of the festival's most solemn ceremonies, when a black ram was sacrificed to the dead hero. Heracles, however, said to have been the first to

BELOW Wrestler Milo of Croton won five consecutive Olympics before being savaged to death by wolves



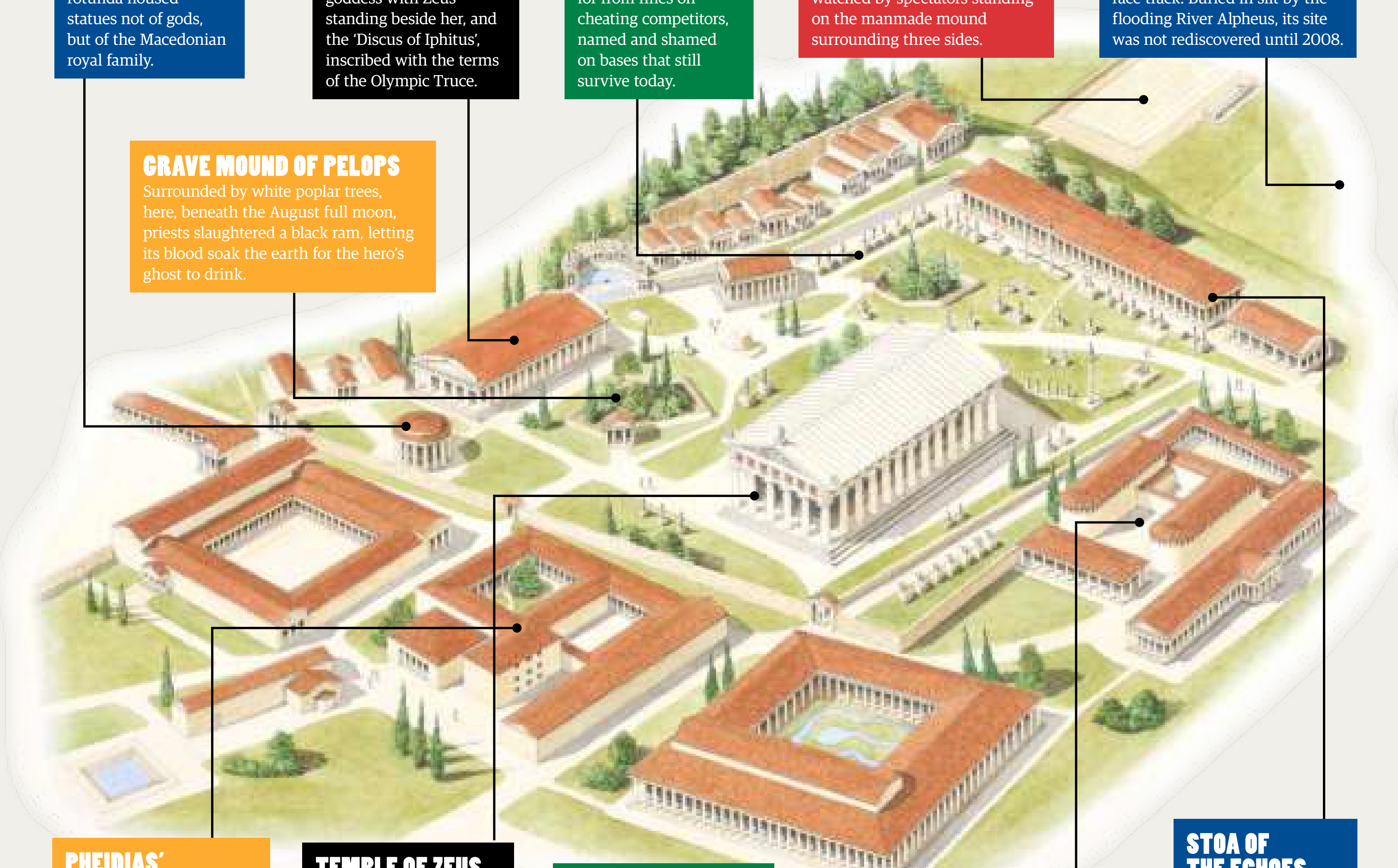
make this sacrifice, was praised for something altogether more prosaic. Legend told that, thanks to his sacrifice to the very specifically named Zeus Who-Banishes-Flies – Zeus Apomuios – he caused Olympia to be fly-free. Spectators had good reason to be thankful, especially since the Games were celebrated in the scorching heat of a Greek August, when the heat and dry air could be horrendous, especially for the athletes.

For the five days surrounding the new moon, tens of thousands of spectators, who could not afford to stay at the Leonidaion – a 'hotel' built by a far-sighted entrepreneur in 360 BCE – pitched tents or slept rough outside the sanctuary with little running water and no sanitation, a jostling melee of increasingly rank bodies. For some, such as Epictetus, the abiding memory was "the sunburn and the filth... the cacophony, the din, the jostling, the shoving, the crowding, and so many people, each absorbed in doing his own thing". However, even he admitted: "I think you're happy to put up with all of this when you think of the splendour of the spectacles."

Being a masculine religious festival in honour of dead heroes and the great god Zeus, women, with the one exception of the priestess of Demeter, were forbidden to attend the Games

THE SANCTUARY OF OLYMPIA IN THE 2ND CENTURY

Bristling with statues of victorious athletes, Olympia was dominated by the marble-roofed Temple of Zeus. Beyond Pelops' grave-mound, the original wooden columns of the Temple of Hera (700 BCE) were gradually replaced in stone, while to the northeast the stadium was separated from the sanctuary by an artificial rise.



PHILIPPEION
Built to commemorate Philip II's victory in battle, this exquisite rotunda housed statues not of gods, but of the Macedonian royal family.

TEMPLE OF HERA
This 7th-century-BCE temple housed an archaic statue of the seated goddess with Zeus standing beside her, and the 'Discus of Iphitus', inscribed with the terms of the Olympic Truce.

ZANES STATUES
Overlooked by a row of temple-like treasuries, the statues were paid for from fines on cheating competitors, named and shamed on bases that still survive today.

STADIUM
Races on the packed-earth track, 180m in length (the distance the Greeks called a 'stade'), were watched by spectators standing on the manmade mound surrounding three sides.

TO HIPPODROME
The 180m-long Hippodrome, scene of the thrilling horse and chariot races, was an elliptical race track. Buried in silt by the flooding River Alpheus, its site was not rediscovered until 2008.

GRAVE MOUND OF PELOPS
Surrounded by white poplar trees, here, beneath the August full moon, priests slaughtered a black ram, letting its blood soak the earth for the hero's ghost to drink.

PHEIDIAS' WORKSHOP
An exact replica of the interior of Zeus' temple (save for the addition of windows), Pheidias created the god's gold and ivory sculpture here before assembling it in situ.

TEMPLE OF ZEUS
Adorned with exterior sculptures showing mythological scenes, the temple housed a 12m-high seated statue of Zeus faced in gold and ivory, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

LEONIDAION
73m square and constructed between 330 and 320 BCE by Leonidas of Naxos, this proto-hotel featured a central courtyard with fragrant shrubs and splashing fountains.

BOULEUTERION
In this complex of two apsidal buildings flanking central chamber with a colonnaded frontage, the Olympic Council met, presided over by a forbidding statue of Zeus Horkios ('Zeus, Oath God').

STOA OF THE ECHOES
This stoa (portico), 90m long, was begun in the mid 4th century BCE. Excellent acoustics made it the ideal setting for contests between trumpeters.

- though a parallel four-yearly women's festival was held at Olympia in honour of the goddess Hera. Gender was not the only restriction; no convicted murderer could enter unless they had first undergone a lengthy purification ritual and all participants were required to speak fluent Greek. Theoretically, any free man could take part, irrespective of social status. Indeed, the flamboyant Alcibiades refused to participate in any sport except chariot racing, the preserve of the rich, because it would mean competing with people of a lower class.

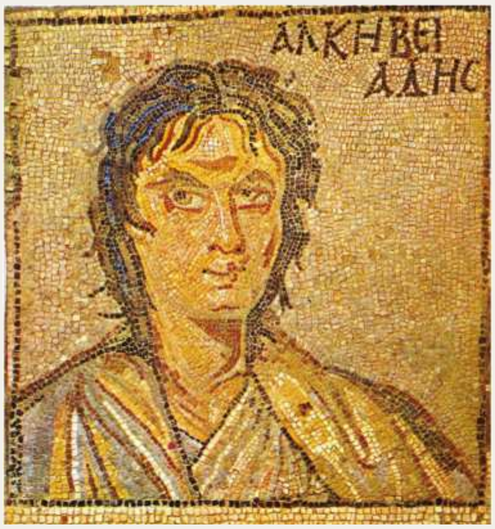
The only other category involved age. There were a handful of contests for boys: boxing, wrestling, the 'stade' race, and - for one year only in 628 BCE - the pentathlon. For every other competition, athletes had to be be adults over 20. A month before the Games began, all were required to gather at Elis, the city that controlled the festival. Here, they were compelled to train and compete in initial heats under the stern watch of the Hellanodikai ('Judges of the Greeks'), while decisions were made about who should compete in which event.

It was now, too, that age categories were decided, something that, without supporting documentation, could be very sensitive. Sometimes, judgements were controversial. In 468 BCE, Pherias of Aegina was prevented from taking part in the men's wrestling because he looked too young. Another contestant, Nicasylos of Rhodes, was so well-developed that he was made to wrestle as an adult even though he was only 18. He won his match, as well as others elsewhere, but so brutal were the contests that he died at 20.

It was participants in contact sports who attracted the greatest interest and controversy. Perhaps the most famous was the wrestler Milo, victorious at five successive Olympics over 20 years. Stories about his strength were numerous, and when a neighbouring city attacked his hometown of Croton in southern Italy, Milo dressed in a lion skin and strode out to meet them wielding a club. Believing him to be Heracles reincarnated, the invaders fled.

Even Milo's death was sensational. The travel writer Pausanias reports that "somewhere in the Crotonian territory he came across a tree of dry wood split open and held with wedges. Milo decided to put his hands inside the tree, but the wedges slipped and he was held fast. Then the

BELOW The playboy politician Alcibiades of Athens stunned Olympia by entering seven chariots at the 416 BCE Games

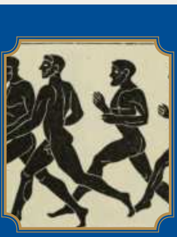


ABOVE The Philippeion, commemorating Philip II's victory over Greece, housed statues of Macedon's royal family

FROM THE FIRST ANCIENT OLYMPICS TO THE FIRST MODERN GAMES

776 BCE
The first recorded Olympic Festival is held. The only contest, the stade race, is won by a local baker, Coroebus of Elis.

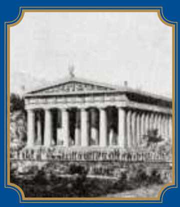
724 BCE
A second contest, the diaulos, is introduced, heralding a flurry of new events, including the pentathlon and wrestling (708 BCE), chariot racing (680 BCE) and horse racing (648 BCE).



720 BCE
After Orisippus of Megara won the stade race at the previous games, 'losing' his loincloth as he ran, athletes begin to compete naked, possibly believing that nudity made them faster.

564 BCE
Arrhichion of Phigalia wins the pankration despite being dead: his opponent, in pain from a dislocated toe, gives up just before Arrhachion dies from strangulation.

458 BCE
Local architect Libon's Temple of Zeus is completed, paid for from the spoils of war against a neighbouring city-state, and adorned with sculptures showing Pelops, Apollo and Heracles.



430 BCE
Pheidias of Athens (who also designed the Parthenon) completes his 13-metre-tall seated statue of Zeus, faced in gold and ivory, carrying Winged Victory in its outstretched hand.

416 BCE
Alcibiades of Athens appropriates the Games for his personal aggrandisement, entering a record seven chariots and treating all the spectators to a banquet.

wolves found him. These beasts are particularly abundant in the territory of Croton…"

But it was a boxer who first brought the Games into disrepute. All participants were required to meet in the Olympic Council Building to swear an oath over the dismembered body of a boar that they would not cheat. However, in 388 BCE, Eupolus of Thessaly was found to have bribed three opponents. The Hellanodikai fined all four men and with the money set up four statues of Zeus, the so-called Zanēs, on the path down to the stadium, with inscriptions naming and shaming the guilty parties. The bases of 16 such Zanēs can still be seen today.

> "Any free man could take part, irrespective of social status"

A more coveted memorial was awarded to the winner of the stade race. Individual cities were usually named each year after their chief magistrate, often leading to confusion for anyone trying to compile more regional chronologies. In the late 5th century BCE, the philosopher Hippias of Elis, wishing to create a universal dating system, invented a solution. He named 776 BCE 'the year of the first Olympiad, when Coroebus of Elis won the stade', 772 BCE 'the year of the first Olympiad, when Antimachus of Elis won the stade', and so on, with the intervening years numbered accordingly 'the second, third and forth year of the Olympiad'.

His system was accepted. From then on, the Greeks effectively began their historical era with the first Olympiad, and the winner of the Olympic 'stade' race and his city were immortalised throughout the Greek-speaking world.

Although the stade was the first competitive event, after the introduction of the diaulos in 724 BCE others followed swiftly. Mostly these were of three types, the first being running: stade, diaulos, dolichos (4.5 kilometres), and a stade race in armour. The second consisted of trials of strength: boxing, wrestling, pancration (a deadly combination of barbaric brawling and bare-knuckle fight), as well as throwing the javelin and discus, with the third comprising equestrian sports: horse races and races for two-, four- and ten-horse chariots as well as a mule-cart races.

In addition, the pentathlon combined elements of both strength and speed. Once they were introduced, some events, such as the stade race, lasted for the entire life of the Games. Others, such as the mule-cart race, were quietly dropped.

Unlike at other international festivals, such as the Pythian Games held at Delphi in honour of Apollo or the Panathenaic Festival at Athens, the Olympics contained no formal cultural or artistic element. But there were two curious contests that had little to do with sporting prowess. Introduced in 396 BCE, the competitions for trumpeters and heralds became particularly popular when they found a new home in a colonnade built after the stadium was relocated more than 80 metres to the east of the Temple of Zeus. The acoustic of this so-called Stoa of the Echoes caused any sound to reverberate no less than seven times.

One event conspicuous for its absence is the marathon, which was inspired by an ancient Greek athletic feat. In 490 BCE, the runner Pheidippides raced to bring the news of the Greek victory over the Persians from Marathon to Athens, a distance of just over 46 kilometres.

RIGHT **Dressed in trademark long flowing robes, a charioteer urges on his four-horse team**

The race was created for the first modern Olympics of 1896, held not at Olympia but in the city of Athens, the new capital of a proudly independent Greece. It marked the dawn of a modern Olympic era with secular games that would be largely unrecognisable to Greece's classical forefathers, not least because of their ethos. Where previously athletes had striven 'always to be best', now, as their new founder, Baron de Coubertin proclaimed: "What is important in life is not to triumph, but to take part; what is essential is not to have won, but to have fought well."

388 BCE

Scandal mars Pisodorus of Rhodes' win in the boys' boxing match when his trainer is found to be a woman – his mother, who narrowly escapes execution as punishment for attending.

356 BCE

Philip II of Macedon learns of his chariot victory and the birth of his son, Alexander the Great, on the same day. His later Philippeion commemorates his defeat of Greece.

164 BCE

Leonidas of Rhodes wins the stade, diaulos and hoplitodromos races, a feat he repeats in the next two Olympics. His record nine wins is broken only in 2016 by Michael Phelps.

40 CE

Caligula tries to remove the statue of Zeus to Rome, but his workmen refuse to continue when they hear unearthly groans emanating from inside it.

67 CE

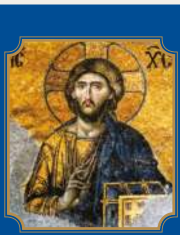
Nero builds a palace and triumphal arch near the hippodrome, 'winning' the ten-horse chariot race despite falling out and failing to complete the course.

391

With Christianity now the religion of imperial Rome, Emperor Theodosius bans all pagan worship, but the Olympic Games probably continue in some form until 425.

462

The statue of Zeus, removed to a patrician's palace in Constantinople in 390, is destroyed by fire, but it has already inspired Byzantine artists' impressions of the face of God.



1896

Inspired by the ancient Games, English public schools and Shropshire's Much Wenlock Olympics, Pierre de Coubertin organises the first modern Olympics in Athens. The Greek Spyros Louis wins the marathon.

© Getty Images

Ancient Olympians

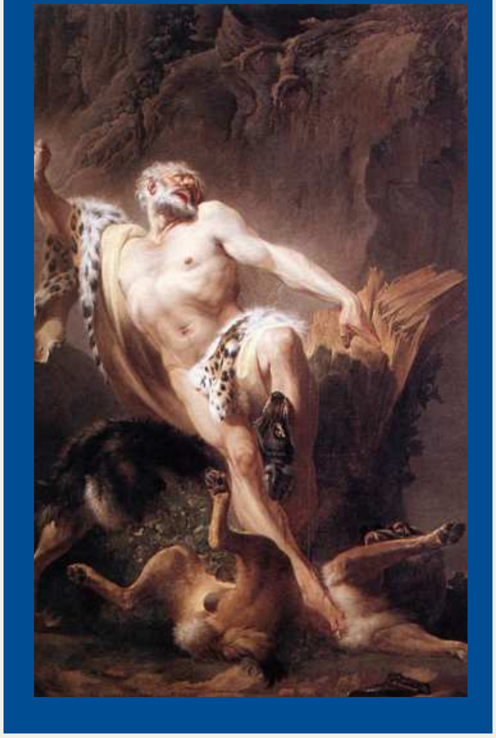
Meet some of the most successful Olympians from the ancient world

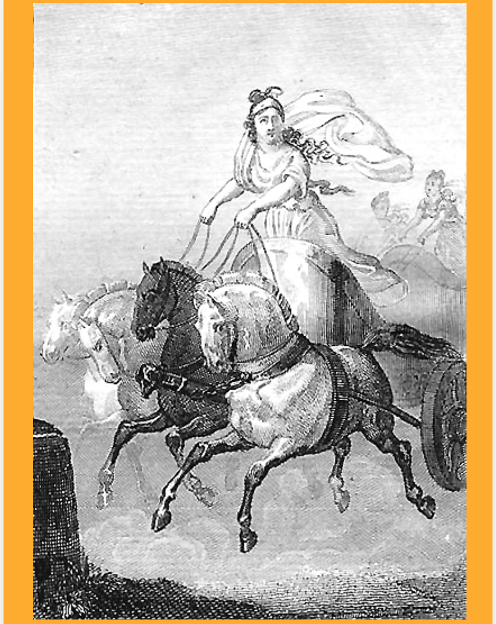
Words Katharine Marsh

MILO OF CROTON

c.600-500 BCE

His name is still proverbial for extraordinary strength, and it's easy to see why. Milo, a Greek athlete who hailed from a Greek colony in southern Italy, was one of the ancient world's most renowned wrestlers. He won the wrestling event in a total of six Olympic Games, as well as seven Pythian Games and other Greek national games. According to legend, he trained by carrying a calf every day from its birth until it matured into an adult ox.





KYNISKA OF SPARTA

396 BCE and 392 BCE

A Spartan princess, Kyniska holds the honour of being the first ever woman to win at the Olympic Games thanks to a small caveat – it was the horse trainer, not the rider, who was crowned the victor. As a matter of fact, Kyniska won the four-horse chariot races twice. Two monuments were erected in Olympia to commemorate her victories. As a woman, Kyniska was barred from the winners' ceremony – and the festival as a whole – but one of her victory monuments read: "I declare that I am the only woman in all of Greece to have won this crown."

ARSINOË II

272 BCE

While Kyniska of Sparta was the first woman to win at the Olympic Games, she wasn't the only one in antiquity. Another royal – this time the queen of Egypt – came first in three chariot races in 272 BCE, according to the Ancient Greek poet Posidippus. Her name was Arsinoë II, and she was the daughter of Ptolemy I Soter, founder of Hellenistic Egypt. In fact, many Egyptian queens from the Ptolemy dynasty went on to win chariot races.

LEONIDAS OF RHODES

164-152 BCE

For four Olympiads in a row, Leonidas of Rhodes ran his way to victory in three events: the stade race, the diaulos race and the armour race. In total, he achieved 12 Olympic victories – a record in antiquity. Leonidas' career certainly wasn't short, either. Four Olympiads mean his career spanned at least 16 years, and his final Games were when he was 36 years old.

THEAGENES OF THASOS

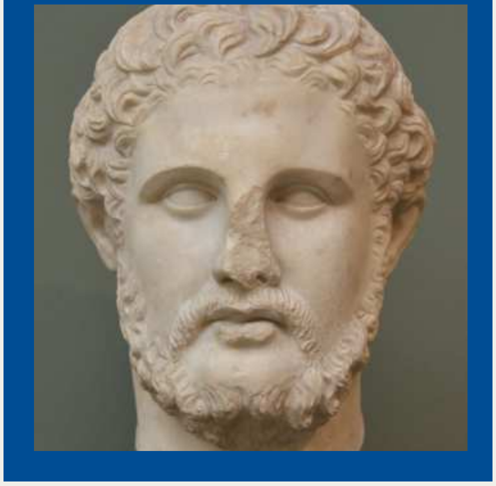
480 BCE, 476 BCE

Theagenes had his eyes on the prize at the 75th Olympiad: he wanted to win the boxing and pankration contests. He had a good chance – as a nine-year-old, he had ripped a bronze statue from its base and was able to carry it home. He won the boxing against Euthymos, but when he went for the pankration, the judges fined him and accused him of entering the boxing just to spite Euthymos.

PHILIP II OF MACEDON

356 BCE, 352 BCE, 348 BCE and others

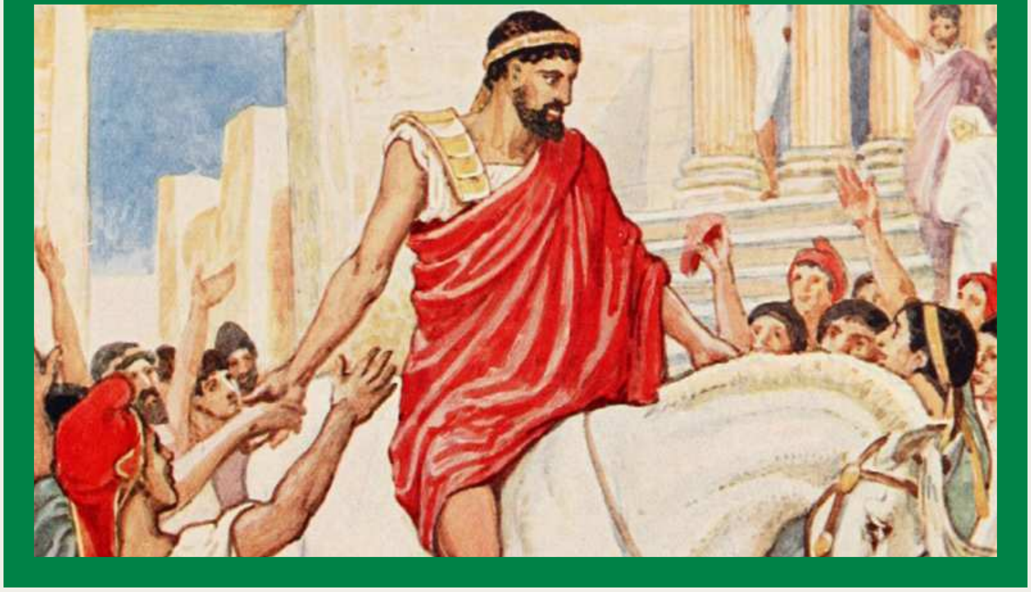
It was supposedly the day of his son's – Alexander the Great's – birth when Philip II of Macedon's horse cantered to victory in the flat race in 356 BCE. That wasn't Philip's only victory, though. For a number of Olympiads he was the winner of the four-horse chariot race, the most prestigious ancient Greek athletic event.



ALCIBIADES

416 BCE

It may have been the middle of the Peloponnesian War, but Athenian general Alcibiades still found the time to compete in the four-horse chariot race at the Olympic Games and win. But he didn't just come first – he also came second and fourth, as he had entered no fewer than seven four-horse chariots. It was a feat no one had achieved before, so he got artists to paint him and make sculptures, and asked Euripides to write a victory ode. His victories became a political advantage until money got the better of him. He later fled to Sparta and then Persia, where he was killed in 404 BCE.

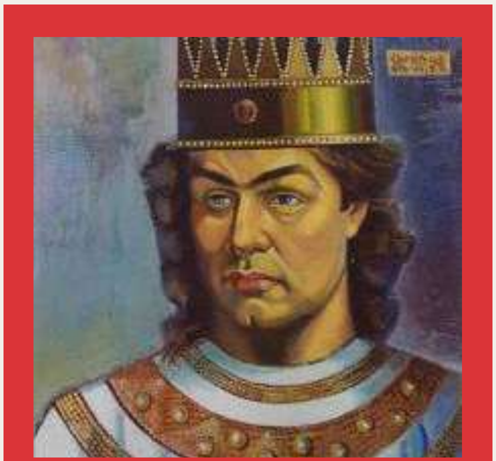


EMPEROR NERO

67 CE

Nero wasn't your average Olympian. Emperors were forbidden from competing, so he changed the rules, and even added artistic exploits like acting, singing, lyre-playing and trumpeting competitions. The Olympics were a sacred event – not one that an emperor should change on a whim. He upset his subjects even further by entering the four-horse chariot race... with ten horses. Despite losing control on a corner and nearly killing himself, he was crowned the winner.

The Roman public was deeply unhappy with his behaviour, and he had to head back to Rome before the festival was over because of an assassination plot against him in the capital.

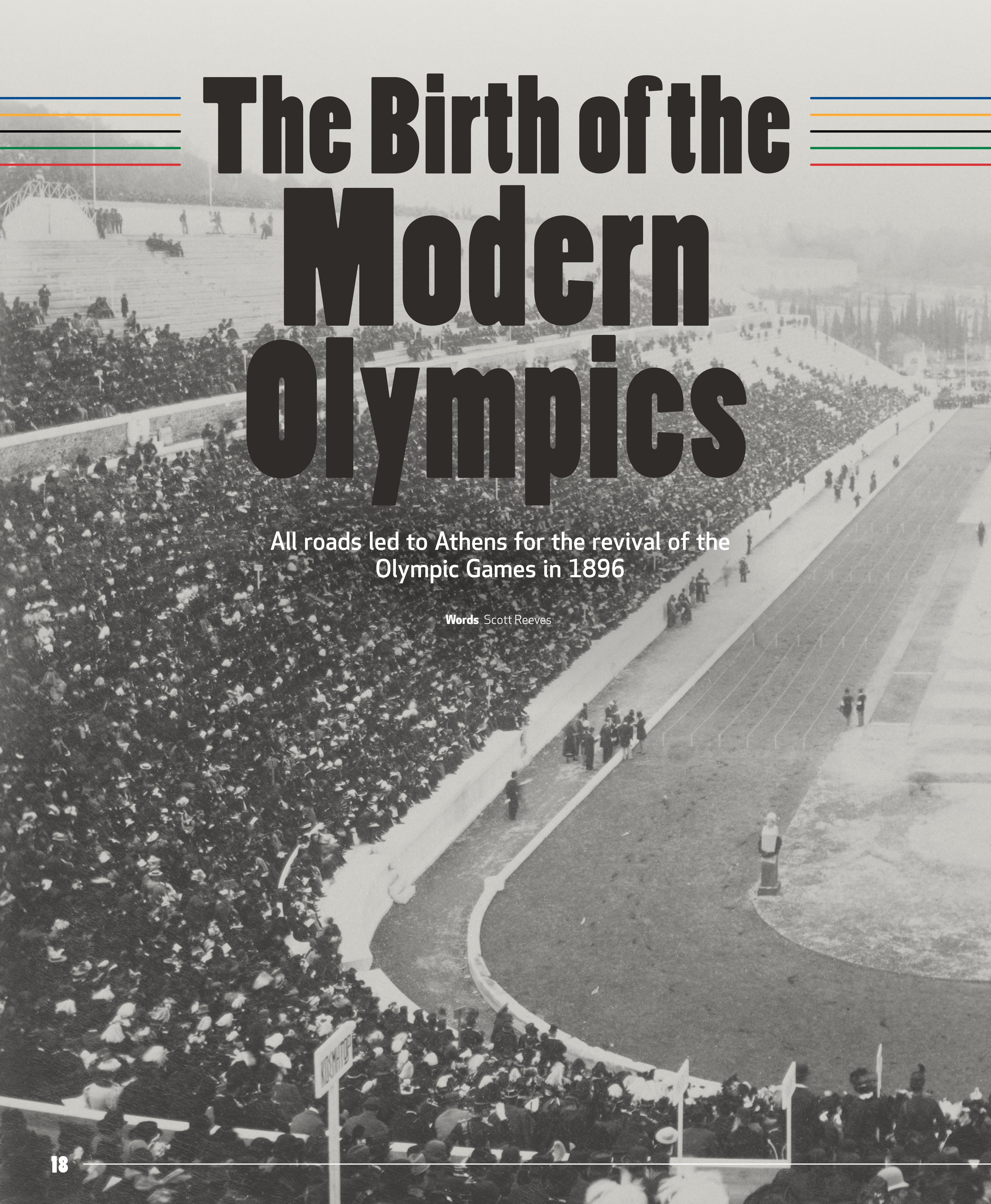


VARAZDAT

c.360 CE

He may have been king of Armenia, but that didn't stop Varazdat from competing at the Olympic Games – and winning. A victor of bare-knuckle boxing (or pugilat, he was one of the last competitors as the Olympics were put to an end by Emperor Theodosius. Despite this, Varazdat's victory gave him glory in the ancient world, although he wasn't the first Armenian king to compete – that title goes to King Trdat III Arshakuno, who won the wrestling at the 265th Games in 281 CE.

© Creative Commons: Sailko, Richard Mortel



The Birth of the Modern Olympics

All roads led to Athens for the revival of the Olympic Games in 1896

Words Scott Reeves

James Connolly stood on the end of the runway and focused on a strip across the track a few metres away. The American was about to take part in an unfamiliar event 4,500 miles from home. He had travelled across the Atlantic Ocean to compete as a high jumper and long jumper. The American team had only arrived in Athens a day earlier; on their arrival, Connolly found out his name had been put down to compete in the hop, step and jump - later called the triple jump - an event rarely staged in the US.

Each competitor had only one chance to win. Connolly was the seventh and final athlete to jump. The distance he had to beat was 12.70 metres, set by Alexandre Tufferi of France, and so the Bostonian ran down the track and launched himself into the air.

The rules of the hop, step and jump allowed different techniques to be employed. Connolly hopped twice on his right foot before landing double-footed in the sand. Tufferi performed a standard hop before stepping onto his other foot and jumping. The next longest jumper, Ioannis Persakis of Greece, used two steps and a jump.

Connolly waited anxiously while the judges measured his leap. He thought it was a good jump, but was it the winner? Eventually his distance was announced: 13.71 metres. Connolly's leap made him the first Olympic champion since the 4th century CE.

BELOW **Around 80,000 spectators attended the opening ceremony where Greek royalty welcomed the competitors**

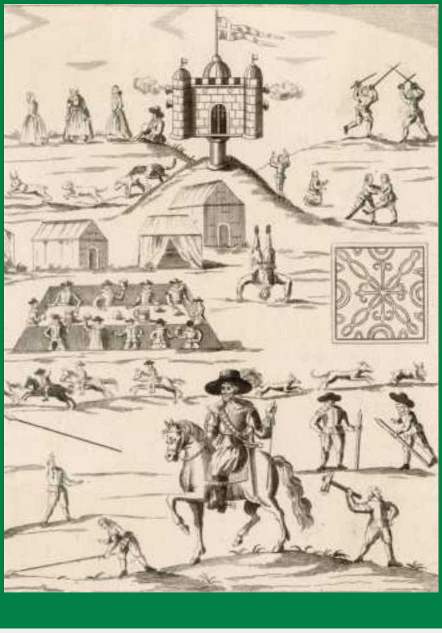
OLYMPIC TRAILBLAZERS

These early attempts to revive the Olympics paved the way for the modern Games

COTSWOLD OLYMPICKS

England *1612-1642, c.1660-1852, 1963-present*

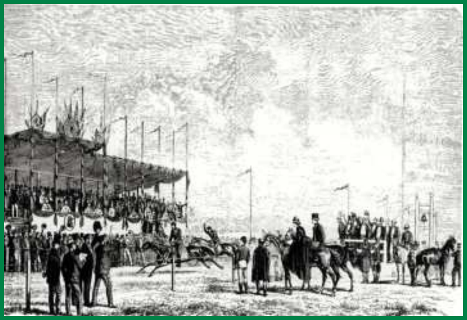
Chipping Campden is the site of a sporting festival first organised 400 years ago by Robert Dover, a local lawyer. Early events included running, wrestling and sword fighting, while the present-day incarnation goes for oddball sports like tug-of-war, shin kicking and dwile-flonking (dancing while avoiding beer-soaked cloths thrown by the opposing team).



RAMLOSA OLYMPICS

Sweden *1834 and 1836*

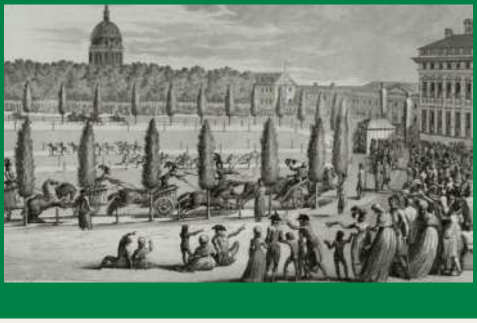
Fencing master Gustaf Johan Schartau ran a competition encompassing running, wrestling, climbing and gymnastics at a horse racing track near Ramlosa. However, organisation was not Schartau's strong point. The chaotic games were criticised for a lack of crowd control with spectators wandering onto the playing fields and disturbing the competitors.



L'OLYMPIADE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

France *1796-1798*

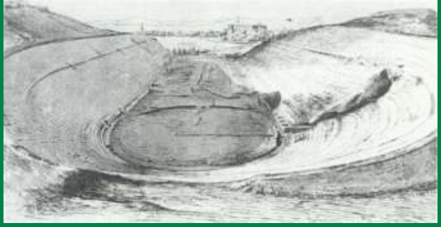
A short-lived annual celebration of the French Revolution dreamed up by Charles-Gilbert Romme, up to 300,000 Parisians flocked to the Champ de Mars to watch running, wrestling, chariot races and equestrian events. Unfortunately, Romme was not among the spectators – he met a grisly end at the guillotine in June 1795.



ZAPPAS OLYMPICS

Greece *1859, 1870 and 1875*

Largely limited to Greek competitors, the Olympics funded by businessman Evangelos Zappas in Athens were a testing ground for the 1896 Games. The latter two Games, held after Zappas' death, were held in the Panathenaic Stadium and included events inspired by the ancient Olympics including running, discus, javelin, wrestling and pole climbing.



WENLOCK OLYMPIAN GAMES

Britain *1850-present*

Shropshire doctor William Penny Brookes began a sporting festival in his home town of Much Wenlock, expanding to encompass the whole of Shropshire before a short-lived National Olympian Games in 1866. Pierre de Coubertin was inspired by the 1890 Wenlock Games and named Brookes an honorary member of the IOC.

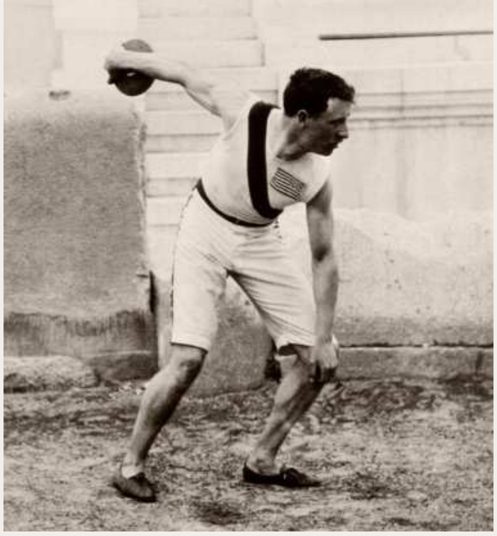
> "When one of the farthest-travelled athletes won the first event, he considered it a vindication of his work"

Although he watched a fellow Frenchman beaten into second place, Pierre de Coubertin must have been quietly satisfied with the winner. The driving force behind the modern Olympics, de Coubertin dreamed of an international festival of sport that would promote peace between the nations of the world. When one of the farthest-travelled athletes won the first event, he considered it a vindication of his work.

De Coubertin was born in Paris in 1863, and he grew up in a time of upheaval. When he was just seven years old, his country was humbled in the Franco-Prussian War. As an eight-year-old, he watched his home city engulfed in the revolutionary Paris Commune uprising.

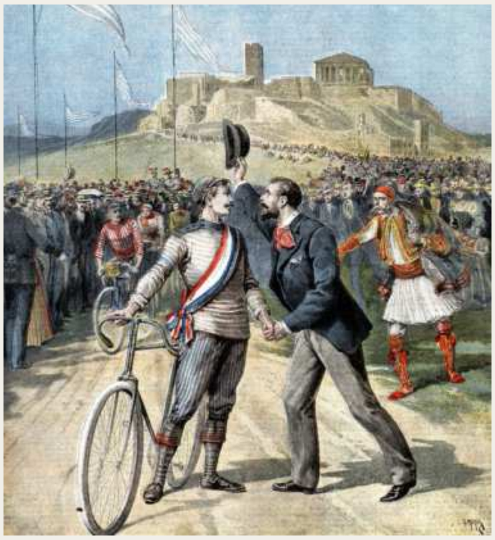
Influenced by the war and turmoil of his schooldays, a passionate interest in physicality burned in de Coubertin. His eyes wandered across the Channel and saw the emphasis on physical education and competitive play in English public schools, identifying it as the reason why Britain had risen to pre-eminence in the 19th century. He also devoured volumes on the ancient world, noting how gymnasiums were an important factor in the Greek civilisation that fascinated 19th-century Europeans.

De Coubertin's two areas of interest coalesced in his mind; he wanted to revive the Olympic Games. Inspired by the concept of the sacred truce that allowed competitors to travel safely to the



ABOVE **Robert Garrett earned top spot in the discus and shot put, helping the Americans to top the table as the most successful nation**

BELOW **Carl Schuhmann left Athens as the most decorated competitor with four victories to his name**



ABOVE **Six cycling events were included in 1896; Frenchman Paul Masson won three of them on the same day**

ABOVE **Crowds arriving at the stadium in Athens, Greece. This same stadium used for the ancient olympiads but completely restored**

Olympics of Ancient Greece, he thought sporting competition could foster good-natured cooperation and peace.

Bringing the Olympics back was not a new idea. Similar revivals had already taken place in Britain, France, Greece and Sweden, but just as the ancient Olympics were restricted to Greek athletes, their modern descendents struggled to grow beyond local contests. De Coubertin had loftier, international goals. In 1889, he sought support to make his dream happen.

One fellow enthusiast who wrote to offer his backing was William Penny Brookes. More than 50 years older than de Coubertin, Brookes had spent his life trying to improve conditions for the inhabitants of the small town of Much Wenlock in Shropshire. Since 1850, the town had held an annual Olympic festival featuring athletics, cycling and team sports alongside less serious events like the old women's race and the blindfolded wheelbarrow race.

Brookes had tried to scale up the Wenlock Olympian Games and go further afield, but his national games ultimately came to nothing. When de Coubertin hoped to do the same, Brookes offered the young dreamer his full support. De Coubertin watched the 1890 Wenlock Olympics and used the contacts in Brookes' address book to arrange a meeting of like-minded enthusiasts in Paris in 1894.

The congress agreed to the revival of the Olympics and the formation of the International Olympic Committee to oversee them. Although de Coubertin initially wanted Paris to host the first modern Olympics in 1900, to coincide with the Paris Exposition, his fellow members persuaded him to strike while the iron was hot. The reborn Olympic Games would begin in two years, in 1896.

Athens was chosen as the host city, recognition that Greece was the spiritual home of the Olympics. De Coubertin stepped aside for Demetrios Vikelas to take the chair as the first president of the IOC, allowing the Greeks to take the lead in the planning of the Games.

With only two years to prepare and a budget that quickly ran out of control – a fate many subsequent host cities would become familiar with – Vikelas enlisted the support of Crown Prince Constantine, a move that captured the public's imagination, and sought the backing of wealthy businessmen. Merchant banker George Averoff agreed to fund the restoration of the Panathenaic Stadium, an ancient racecourse excavated earlier in the 19th century.

The stadium was ready for the opening ceremony on 6 April 1896, although Greek calendars actually had the date listed as 25 March since Greece retained the old Julian calendar. The United States team only just arrived in time due to confusion over the starting date and, as a result, their athletes had little chance to prepare.

The competitors gathered on the infield of the Panathenaic Stadium, grouped by nation. The exact number of Olympians is unknown but the best estimates suggest that 241 competitors came from 14 nations. Crown Prince Constantine gave a speech before handing over to his father, King George I, to officially open the Games.

The contests began immediately. First up were the three heats of the 100 metres. The tight turns and loose ground of the Panathenaic Stadium meant that times were relatively slow. Thomas Burke of the US was the fastest qualifier for the 100 metres in 11.8 seconds at a time when the world record was 10.8 seconds. Burke went on to win the 100-metre final and picked up a second title in the 400 metres, despite his unconventional crouched start when most other runners elected to stand on the start line.

Attention moved away from the stadium in the following days. The cold, open water of the Bay of Zea was the setting for the swimming events. The star of the single day of competition was Hungarian student Alfred Hajos. The 18-year-old only learned to swim at 13 after his father drowned in the River Danube, but Hajos quickly discovered he had a knack for moving through the water at speed.

Hajos ploughed through the waves to victory in the 100-metre freestyle, pipping Otto Herschmann by less than a second. Then the winner towelled off, warmed up and turned his attention to the longer 1,200-metre freestyle.

The long-distance swimmers were taken out to sea by boat so they could swim the required distance back to shore. Hajos had smeared his body with a thick layer of grease but it offered little protection against the bone-chilling cold. Four-metre waves crashed over the nine hardy swimmers. After easily winning the race by two minutes and 40 seconds, Hajos declared that his victory was purely due to "my will to live".

> "The crowd eagerly awaited the first runner in the Panathenaic Stadium"

Hajos hoped to earn a third victory in the 500-metre freestyle, but it was sandwiched between the other races and he felt he did not have enough time to get ready. He had no chance in the fourth race. That was open to sailors of the Greek Royal Navy only; just three swimmers took the plunge.

Hajos was the most successful swimmer in the 1896 Olympics, but the most competitor in the Games as a whole was Germany's Carl Schuhmann. He had already competed in the hop, step and jump, long jump, shot put and two-handed weightlifting during the first three days of the Olympics before meeting up with the rest of the 11-man German gymnastics team. Schuhmann helped his country finish top of the rankings in the team horizontal bar and team parallel bars. He also earned the highest mark and the Olympic title in the individual vault.

But Schuhmann was not finished yet. He entered himself in the wrestling competition, a single event with no weight divisions. Most competitors, like Schuhmann, treated it as a supplementary contest after competing in other sports. Schuhmann went on to defeat weightlifting champion Launceston Elliot before taking on Greek wrestling specialist Georgios Tsitas in the final.

With no time limit, Schuhmann hoped to tire his bigger opponent. Darkness fell after 40 minutes of grappling and the two finalists were told to return the next day. 15 minutes after the restart, Schuhmann pulled off a shock victory. Having won four titles, the multi-talented Schuhmann was described as the most popular man in the country by King George I.

The king meant well, but he was wrong. There was no doubt who was the most popular person in Greece by the end of the Olympic Games: Spyridon Louis. The Greek water-carrier won the marathon, a race specifically conceived for the reborn Olympics. Inspired by the tale of the messenger Pheidippides, who ran to Athens to announce victory in the Battle of Marathon and promptly dropped dead, the 40-kilometre road race followed the same legendary route.

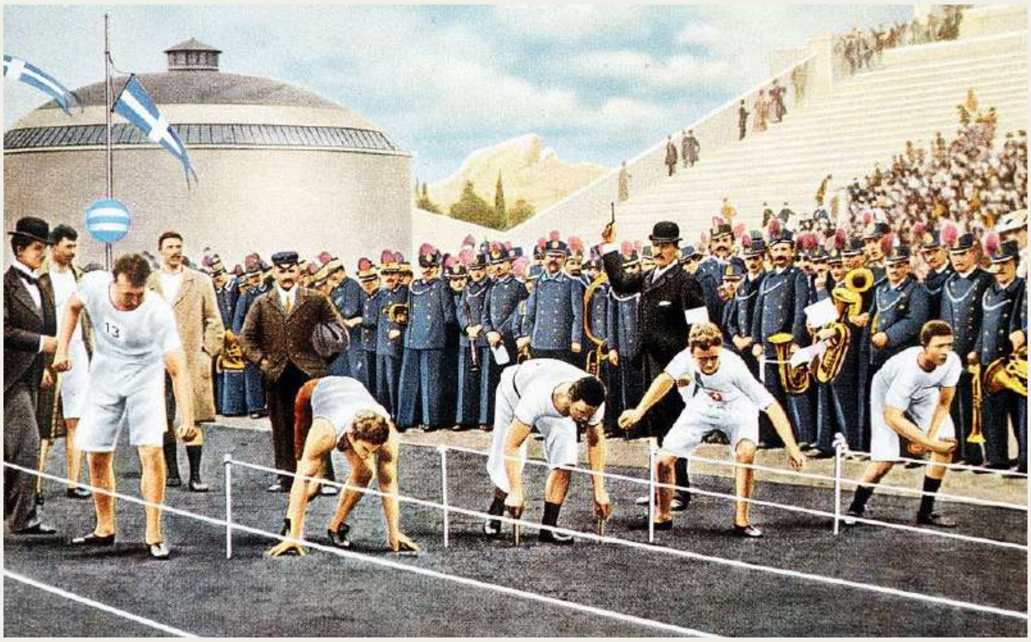
The first half of the race saw the pace set by Albin Lermusiaux of France, Edwin Flack of Australia and Arthur Blake of the US. The same runners made up the top three in the 1,500 metres and, used to shorter distances, had gone out far too fast. All three dropped out not long after halfway. Louis had a more measured approach. He stopped for refreshment (some suggest he enjoyed a glass of wine) before confidently stating he would catch the frontrunners.

The crowd eagerly awaited the first runner in the Panathenaic Stadium. The track and field athletics programme was complete without a single Greek winner so the spectators erupted into cheers when Louis was the first man in. Crown Prince Constantine and Prince George joined him on a lap around the track before Louis crossed the line in 2.58:50.

More than seven minutes passed before second-placed Charilaos Vasilakos joined him. It was nearly a famous all-Greek podium, but the judges ended up disqualifying third-placed Spyridon Belokas after the Hungarian delegation

BELOW James Connolly became the first modern Olympic champion when he won the hop, step and jump

BELOW Pierre de Coubertin was the driving force behind the modern Olympics and was determined to make it an international affair



ABOVE The final of the 100 metres saw competitors choose a variety of starting positions pointed out that he had covered part of the course in a carriage.

Louis was given the honour of leading the competitors on a lap of honour during the closing ceremony. Eight days of competition had seen 43 different victors, but only at the end of the Olympics were prizes given to the new champions. King George awarded a silver medal, an olive branch and a diploma to each of the winners. Runners-up received a copper medal, a laurel branch and a diploma. Those in third got nothing.

There were other differences to the present-day Olympics. None of the competitors were women. De Coubertin was opposed to including women in the Olympics, later describing women's sport as "impractical, uninteresting, unaesthetic, and we are not afraid to add: incorrect". One Greek woman, Stamata Revithi, tried to enter the marathon anyway, but the organisers barred her from the race. Instead, Revithi ran the marathon route the following day, finishing in five and a half hours.

Nor did the Olympics attract the best sportsmen in the world. The tennis men's singles title went to a future Irish nationalist MP, John Boland, who happened to be visiting a friend in Athens. With none of the world's leading tennis players in attendance, Boland's fellow competitors included weightlifters, hammer throwers and runners brought in to make up the numbers.

One rule governed those who did turn up to compete: all were supposed to be amateurs. Distance runner Carlo Airoldi made his way to Athens on foot from Milan, his 28-day journey documented by an Italian magazine, only to be declared ineligible to compete because he had accepted prize money earlier in his career. The only exception was granted in the fencing arena. Fencing tutors were allowed to compete in the masters foil, an event that gave Greece its first modern-day champion.

Greece ultimately finished second in the roll of honour with ten titles; the much-travelled USA had most with 11. It was a haul that pleased George I. The Greek king had fully embraced the Olympic dream and he made clear in a celebratory banquet that he thought any future Olympic Games should remain in Athens.

De Coubertin disagreed. The driving force behind the Olympics was convinced that the competition must move from city to city rather than stay at a single site. De Coubertin won the argument and took over as president of the IOC. The next Olympic Games would be in his home town of Paris.

Yet, despite the undoubted success of the first modern Olympic Games, de Coubertin's festival of sport faced tough times ahead.

THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

From small beginnings, the IOC has grown into a powerful organisation

Pierre de Coubertin inspired his audience with his vision of an international festival of sport when delegates arrived at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1894. What became the inaugural Olympic Congress agreed to revive the Olympic Games and selected Athens as the first host in 1896.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) was tasked with overseeing the Olympic movement. The first IOC had 15 members from 11 countries (Britain, France and Italy had two members) with Demetrius Vikelas as president. The initial intention was that the president would change every four years with a member from the new host country taking over. However, de Coubertin soon forgot the rule and stayed in the chair after the 1900 Olympics in Paris, only standing down in 1925. To date, nine men have held the position.

The present-day IOC has more than 100 members, each of whom must speak either English or French. More than 30 commissions report to it on specific topics. However, as the IOC and Olympics have grown, so have the opportunities for corruption. The awarding of several Olympic Games have been mired in controversy over reports of bribes for IOC votes, notably the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.

The IOC was a men-only affair in 1896; women weren't allowed to compete in the first Olympics either

ABOVE Leonidas Pyrgos became Greece's first modern Olympic champion when he won the masters foil fencing

© Alamy, Getty Images

“These five rings represent the five parts of the world now won over to the cause of olympism and ready to accept its fecund rivalries. What is more, the six colours [including the white background] thus combined reproduce those of all nations without exception.” - Pierre de Coubertin, Founder of the Olympic Movement and designer of the Olympic Rings.

© Getty Images

Women and the Olympics

It took a long, fierce battle before women had the right to feature in the modern Olympics

Words Bee Ginger

Originating in ancient Greece, the Olympic Games were held every four years between 776 BCE and 393 CE, a festival of sport reserved solely for men. These men were both physically fit and ideally of aristocratic background. Women were excluded from Athenian democracy both in practice and principal. Their role was restricted to raising a family and tending to the home, and no woman ever acquired citizenship in ancient Greece, let alone permission to partake in the Games. This may well have been a relief to some, though, as all events and races were completed in the nude by both competitors and trainers.

Women in Ancient Greece had no political or legal rights, and the philosopher Aristotle even went so far as to say women were "utterly useless and caused more confusion than the enemy". Therefore a ban on women was retained by the ancient Olympics predominantly due to both its political and religious significance. Originally held in Elis, the government at that time decreed that if a woman were caught present at the Olympic Games, she would be "cast down from Mount Typaeum into the river flowing below".

However, despite the regulations and threats, there were games in ancient Greece at which women were permitted to compete. Known as the Heraean Games, they were dedicated to the goddess Hera, queen of the Olympian gods and wife of Zeus. These games were the first official women's athletic competition to be held at the Elis Olympic stadium. In the beginning they consisted only of foot races. The winners were awarded crowns of olive leaves and meat from the animal sacrificed to Hera. Victors were given the right to inscribe their names on the columns of Hera's temple, and here participation was restricted to young unmarried women.

The legend of Kyniska also shows that women were involved many years ago in the Olympics. Born in 440 BCE, Kyniska was the daughter of Archidamus II, king of Sparta. An accomplished equestrian, she aspired to not only take part in but win at the Olympics. By this time, the rules had been slightly relaxed to allow women to participate as horse trainers. Encouraged by her brother Agesilaus II, Kyniska won the four-horse chariot race twice, first in 396 BCE and then again in 392 BCE. She became the first female champion in the Olympics and was honoured with a bronze statue at the Temple of Zeus in Olympia. Her victory had an enormous impact on the women of ancient Greece, inspiring athletes including Timareta, Cassia and Euryleonis to go on and achieve victory in the chariot.

Despite the origin of these Games remaining unclear, one theory suggests they were hosted as an effort to resolve tensions between Pisa in western Greece and the city of Elis. 16 elderly women were chosen (one from each of the Peloponnese states) to weave a garment similar to a robe for Hera. They were required to do this every four years and to organise the Games as a symbol of peace.

Historians remain unsure of what societal changes led the Greeks to establish separate games for men and women. It is possible that the rise in Roman influence in the Hellenic

BELOW Competitors in the ladies' figure skating competition at the Winter Olympics in St Moritz, Switzerland, February 1928. Seventh from the left is Norwegian Sonja Henie, who won the competition

THE INSPIRATIONAL SONJA HENIE

Ladies single figure skater, Olympic champion and Hollywood movie star

Sonja Henie was a ladies single skating sensation. Born in Oslo, Norway, she began her figure skating career at the age of ten and took part in the 1924 Winter Olympics aged 11. It has been said that no one caught attention or adoration as she did. In all, she won ten successive World Championships, six European Championships and three successive gold medals at the Olympics in 1928, 1932 and 1936. In the 1928 games in St Moritz, Switzerland, she won gold and earned her first place by impressing six of the seven judges. At the following games in 1932, the vote from the judges was unanimous. Henie not only helped to define the sport of figure skating, but she put it firmly on the map, setting a skating record that remains unrivalled.

Announcing her retirement in 1936 from competitive skating and turning instead to professional skating, Henie received a call from Arthur Wirtz, owner of the Chicago Bulls, the Chicago Black Hawks and the Chicago Stadium, asking her to put together her dream skating show. They began touring within a matter of weeks, and from this project a career in film beckoned. When Hollywood called, Henie was quoted as saying, "I want to do with skates (in the movies) what Fred Astaire is doing with dancing." At the height of her career she was one of the highest-paid actresses in Hollywood, but it is her many stunning achievements on ice that will be remembered most.

Sonja Henie winning gold in the ladies singles at the 1932 Winter Olympic Games in Lake Placid

peninsula might have played a part. In Rome, the daughters of aristocratic and wealthy families participated freely in men's athletic competitions. Unsurprisingly, the majority of participants of the Heraean Games were the women of Sparta. Unlike in other Greek city-states, Spartan women were very much encouraged to take part in the same physical activities as men due to the belief that athletic women would go on to bear strong and healthy offspring.

> **"Milliat tirelessly pressed for more women's events to be included in the Olympics"**

At the end of the 19th century, the modern Olympic movement was re-established by Pierre de Coubertin, known as the father of the modern Olympic Games. Coubertin, a French baron, was the driving force behind the new movement. He wanted it to be a celebration of virility and opposed competitiveness between women. He argued strongly that a woman's role in society and her physiological constitution made her unsuitable to participate. Instead he insisted on adhering to the ideals held by the Greeks all those years ago. Therefore the 1896 Olympic Games in Greece were reserved for only male athletes.

However, in spite of the prejudice against them, women were able to take part unofficially in the second Olympics, which were held in Paris in 1900, although they could only compete in sports deemed compatible with their 'fragility' and femininity. Because of this they were not permitted to take part in field or track events. Instead, the 22 women competed in tennis, croquet, golf, sailing and equestrianism, and later skating, archery and water motor sports in the 1908 games held in London. But if women were ever to become truly free to take part in an unrestricted competition, someone with real influence would have to back the movement.

Enter Alice Milliat, a passionate rower, swimmer, football and basketball player who harboured a strong belief in women's equality in the sporting world. She became president of the Fédération des

BELOW **A British athlete receives Gustaf V's special award during a prize-giving ceremony held at the end of the 1926 Women's World Games in Gothenburg**

ABOVE **Hitomi (2nd left) of Japan crosses the finish line to win in the Women's 100m qualification for the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics**

BELOW **Hera was the Olympian queen of the gods. The first official women's athletic competition, the ancient Heraean Games, was dedicated to her**

ABOVE **Norma Enriqueta Basilio de Sotelo, hurdler and the first woman to light the Olympic flame, carrying the torch during the opening ceremony of the 1968 Games held in Mexico City**

sociétés féminines sportives de France (FSFSF) in 1919. In 1922, she brought the Hera Games back to life by founding the Women's Olympic Games. This was held every four years until 1934. Far from feeling sated by her success in furthering women's sport, Milliat tirelessly pressed for more women's events to be included in the Olympics. Her desire to encourage enthusiasm in women's football in France, combined with her organisational ability, led to France establishing a championship league for women, with Milliat inaugurating regular international matches to take place between England and France.

Milliat's first Women's Olympics were held in Paris and included five teams: France, Great Britain, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and the United States. Drawing a crowd of 20,000 people, the 11 athletic events saw 18 of the athletes break world records. However, use of the term 'Olympic Games' had infuriated the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and they were able to persuade Millat and the FSFSF to change the name of their event to the Women's World Games. This was in exchange for adding ten women's events to the 1928 Olympics.

This progress was helped by the departure of Coubertin, who left the IOC in 1925, and also coincided with the Soviet Union's proletarian equivalent to the Olympic Games, the Spartiakade, which was held in Moscow in 1928 and was open to women. Other sports were added to the Women's World Games schedule, and further Games were held until 1934, when the FSFSF was forced to hand the control over to the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF).

A pivotal moment in the history of women's sport arrived at the 1924 Games in Paris, with 135 women officially permitted to take part. This was followed up in 1928 with female athletes being allowed to compete in the athletics categories, which considerably increased their participation in the games as a whole. Between 1928 and 1936 games in Berlin, women were finally able to compete in all the main Olympic activities, heralding successes across the board. Women continued to strive, and at the London 1948 games the Dutch athlete Francina Elsje Blankers-Koen won a staggering four Olympic medals in field and track events, earning her the nickname the 'Flying Housewife'. At the same games, Micheline Ostermeyer also made a name for herself as a skilled discus thrower.

Slowly women's participation increased, with Norma Enriqueta Basilio de Sotelo becoming the first female torch bearer at the 1968 Games in Mexico City. Then at the 2000 Sydney Games, the Olympic flame was carried by all-women torchbearers to commemorate the 100 years of female participation in the games.

By London 2012, women made up 45 per cent of the competitors, and for the first time all participating nations were to have at least one woman in their squad. It was also the first year that female boxing was introduced.

Women's participation and success in the Games has continued to go from strength to strength, with the number of female competitors increasing significantly from a mere 26.1 per cent at Seoul 1988 to a record 45.2 per cent when Rio hosted in 2016. The proposed event programme for the 2022 Winter Olympics, which will be hosted in Beijing, shows an increase of 45.44 per cent in female representation. The first fully gender-balanced Olympic event came in 2018 when Buenos Aires hosted the Youth Olympic Games. However, the 2021 Olympics in Tokyo will be the games with the closest to complete gender equality, with a ratio of 48.8 per cent of female competitors to 51.2 per cent male participants.

The IOC has been committed to creating greater opportunities for female athletes and has fought to expand the Olympic programme to include more women's events. The Olympic programme has been required since 1991 to include women in any new sport that seeks to be included in the programme. The IOC understands that every opportunity provided for female athletes and women's sport as a whole has a knock-on effect for the positive promotion of gender equality and opportunities around the world. It is to be hoped that the 2024 games in Paris will be the first Olympic Games in history to welcome an equal amount of male and female athletes. But whatever happens, women's sport will continue to flourish, and future Koens and Ostermeyrs will rightly continue to dream of glory on the biggest stage.

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The Strangest Sports in Olympic History

From pigeon shooting to roller skating, discover the odd events that once graced the Olympic schedule

Words Scott Reeves

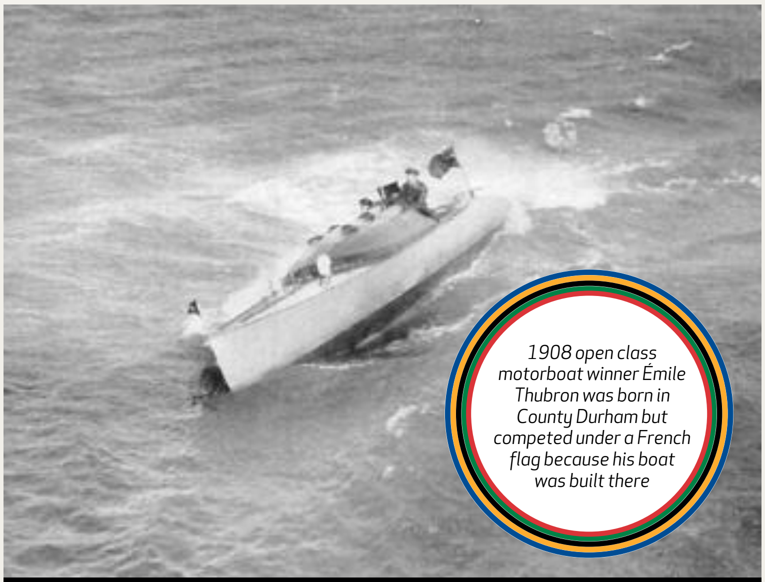
SWIMMING OBSTACLE RACE *1900*

This sounds like great fun. Held on the river Seine alongside the other swimming events at the Paris Olympics, swimmers had to complete 200 metres while overcoming three sets of obstacles. First they climbed over a pole, then scrambled over a line of boats, then they had to swim under another row of boats.

Twelve swimmers took on the challenge. The top two finishers in each of the three four-man heats qualified, and the four fastest losers also progressed to make ten finalists. Most of those who qualified improved their times in the second run as they worked out the best way to tackle the obstacles. Frederick Lane from Australia was the winner; he took a different line from many of his fellow swimmers by clambering over the stern of the boat line after realising it was easier to clamber on the back. Lane's winning time of 2:38.4 was only 13 seconds slower than his gold-medal time in the non-obstacle 200-metre freestyle.

Surely this is one event primed to make a comeback – who doesn't want to see Adam Peaty and Katie Ledecky plunging into the water as they mistime a leap on an inflatable obstacle course?

Frederick Lane broke several world records as well as winning the only obstacle race in Olympic history



1908 open class motorboat winner Émile Thubron was born in County Durham but competed under a French flag because his boat was built there

Wolseley-Siddely, crewed by the fabulously wealthy duke of Westminster, failed to finish the open class race after running aground in bad weather

MOTORBOATING *1908*

The organisers did not think of the spectators when they came up with this one. Included in the Olympics once (and as a demonstration event at Paris in 1900), sailors had to race 40 nautical miles over a five-lap course in the sea off Southampton. Barely anyone could see the action and those that could were probably not impressed, with average speeds around 19 miles per hour.

Of the three races completed, two victories went to the crew of the same boat. Gyrinius, winner of the six-metre class and 60-foot class races, was designed by shipbuilder Sir John Isaac Thornycroft. His son, Thomas, was helmsman. More than 40 years later, at the ripe old age of 70, Thomas returned as an Olympic competitor with the British yachting team in Helsinki.

Gyrinius was successful primarily because it could survive the atrocious weather. It was the only boat to finish its two races. The open class also had only one finisher despite being abandoned and restarted the next day. Faced with escalating gales as well as some seasick sailors, the remaining six races were cancelled. Olympic motorboating sank into the depths of history and it wasn't much missed.

SOLO SYNCHRONISED SWIMMING

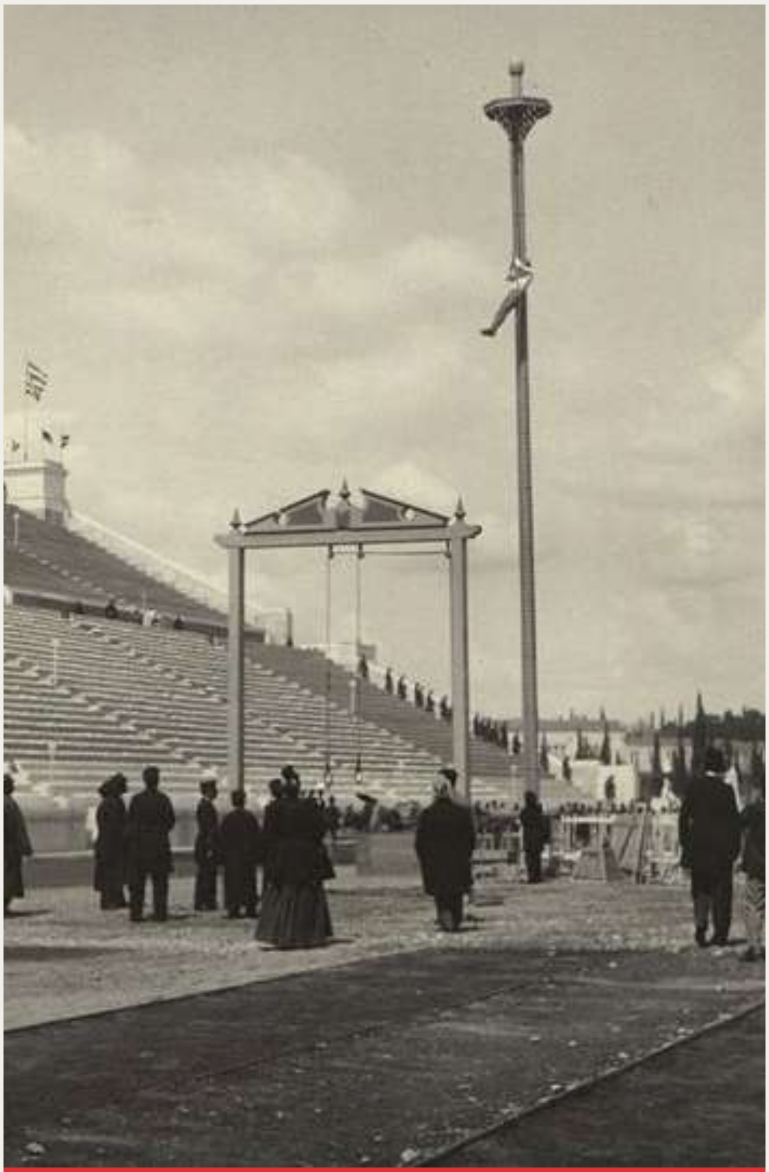
1984-1992

Solo synchronised swimming didn't make much of a splash when it first appeared in the Olympic programme at Los Angeles in 1984. It continued for three Olympiads despite detractors pointing out a fundamental problem: if synchronised swimming is a sport in which swimmers perform a coordinated routine, who exactly is a solo swimmer synchronising with? (The answer is that the swimmer's choreography was supposedly synchronised with the music to create a water dance.) Still, nobody could doubt a combination of strength, flexibility and endurance was required to succeed.

Only women were allowed to compete. Tracie Ruiz won on behalf of the United States in 1984, with Canada's Carolyn Waldo coming second; the two medallists swapped steps on the podium at Seoul in 1988. It got a bit messy in 1992. American Kristen Babb-Sprague was awarded first place ahead of Canadian Sylvie Fréchette, but an investigation into odd scoring in the final revealed that one judge had incorrectly awarded Fréchette a score of 8.7 rather than 9.7 on his computer. The Canadian appeal resulted in Fréchette's score being upgraded and both competitors were given a gold medal.

The solo sync was dropped in favour of an eight-person team event in 1996; Olympic synchronised swimming remains a women-only affair.

Tracie Ruiz practising in the McDonald's Olympic Swim Stadium at the 1984 Olympics



The first Olympic rope climb was the highest and only two competitors made it to the top

ROPE CLIMBING

1896, 1900-08,1924, 1932

We might think of weakling schoolchildren struggling to climb a rope with PE teachers shouting at the bottom, but rope climbing was once an Olympic sport. Presumably organisers could not agree on the event's worth since it was added and dropped from the schedules several times until finally departing in 1932.

At the first Olympic Games in 1896, the rope was 14 metres (46 feet) long and only two of five climbers reached the top. Judges chose the winner based on climbing style – competitors had to begin from a seated position and keep their legs horizontal and straight to ensure they climbed with their upper body only. In subsequent Olympics, competitors climbed between seven and ten metres (23 and 33 feet) and were ranked on how long it took them to reach the top – usually just a few seconds.

The event's high point came in 1924 when 70 gymnasts from nine different countries climbed 7.3 metres (24 feet) to the top. The mammoth entry was a result of the rope climb being included in the apparatus of the individual and team all-arounds. Bedrich Supcík of Czechoslovakia took home a gold medal as the fastest climber and the ten points he earned helped him to bronze in the individual all-around.

EQUESTRIAN VAULTING

1920

Like horse riding? Like gymnastics? Why not combine the two? That's exactly what happened in the 1920 Olympics at Antwerp.

Eighteen competitors entered, all of whom were army officers. Each had to take on four different manoeuvres. First they had to jump onto the horse from a standing position before jumping back off, attempting from both sides. The second was a jump clear over the horse's back. Third was a jump over the horse with a salto (an aerial forward roll), and last was to perform gymnastics while the horse was walking.

The Belgian representatives did well in front of their home crowd at the Olympisch Stadion. Daniel Bouckaert took gold with 30.5 points, Louis Finet earned bronze; they were separated by a Frenchman known only by his surname, Field. The five competitors from Sweden were no match for their rivals and finished bottom of the rankings but, since only three countries bothered to send entrants, they still got to go home with bronze in the team competition.

Vaulting continues as an equestrian sport, although it now features more choreographed routines with elements of dance incorporated.

Horse vaulting, pictured here in 1952, had long been associated with the military

All three female competitors were eliminated in the singles first rounds, leaving men to play for the title

CROQUET *1900*

The mallet-and-ball sport associated with English country gardens actually only appeared in an Olympics across the Channel, at Paris in 1900, and all the competitors were French. It was not a raging success. Gaston Aumoitte and Georges Johin turned up for the doubles competition to discover that they were the only pair and walked away with the easiest gold medal in Olympic history. Quite what the single spectator who purchased a ticket thought is unknown. His 570-mile journey from Nice was a wasted one.

The following week, ten players turned up for the singles competitions. They included three women, marking the first time that women took part in an Olympic event. Doubles winner Gaston Aumoitte finished first in the singles one-ball, while Chrétien Waydelich took the gold in the two-ball.

Croquet was such a flop that even the official Olympic report described it as a sport with "hardly any pretensions to athleticism", but that did not stop the organisers including roque four years later in St Louis. The new game was a hard-surface version of croquet with a barrier around the playing surface to allow billiard-style rebounds. Just like in 1900, it was an easy way to inflate the host's medal count since only American players took part.

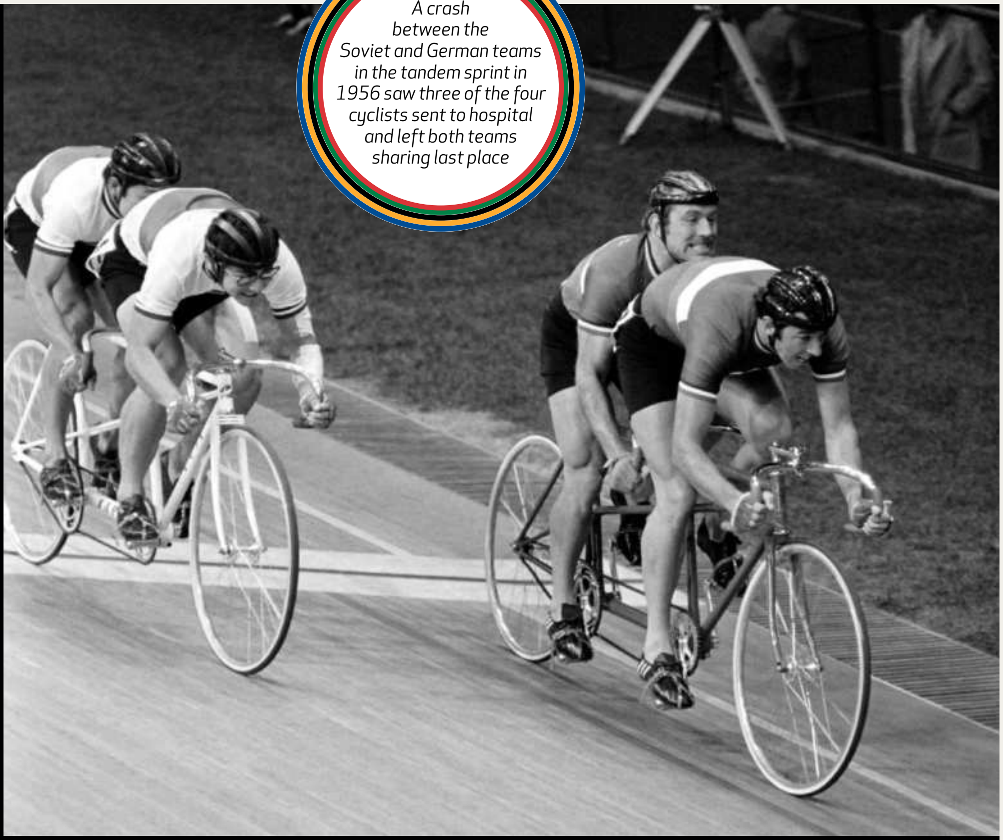
CYCLING TANDEM SPRINT

1908, 1920-72

Once a staple of the Olympic cycling programme, the 2,000-metre tandem saw two pairs on the track at the same time in elimination races until the last two standing (or should that be cycling?) took on each other in the gold-medal race. Tandem sprints were high-speed affairs since two cyclists pedalling hard at the same time generate speeds far greater than a single rider can.

Perhaps the tandem's greatest Olympic moment was the victory of an Australian pair, Lionel Cox and Russell Mockridge, who decided to team up at Helsinki in 1952 despite never having ridden together. Using a tandem borrowed from the British team, Cox and Mockridge survived an early scare in their first heat after they eased up on the final straight, allowing their opponents to close the gap and force a photo finish. By the time the final came around, Cox and Mockridge were a well-oiled machine and defeated the South African pair to take a surprise gold.

France and Italy produced the most winning teams with three gold medals each, while the British team was often unlucky with four silvers. Tandem cycling lives on in the Paralympics, where sighted pilots ride with blind or visually impaired competitors.



A crash between the Soviet and German teams in the tandem sprint in 1956 saw three of the four cyclists sent to hospital and left both teams sharing last place

The tandem sprint produced some close racing but also some spectacular crashes

TUG OF WAR

1900-20

One of the few sports where being overweight is a distinct advantage, tug of war saw teams of five, six or eight pulling a rope with an opposing team doing exactly the same at the other end. Six feet was the threshold for victory; a time limit ensured that stalemates could be decided before the pullers were exhausted. Many athletes needed to save their bodies to compete in other events like hammer throwing and rugby.

The first winners were a combined team of three Danes and three Swedes, but some Olympiads were less international affairs. In 1904, the top four all hailed from the United States, while in 1908 all three medals went to teams from Britain. The 1908 Games saw the tug of war embroiled in controversy when the Liverpool Police Team appeared wearing enormous, weighted boots. The coppers claimed they were merely wearing their regulation police boots and were allowed to compete but they still failed to defeat their compatriots from the City of London Police Team in the gold-medal tug. Tug of war was dropped after the 1920 Games and burly strongmen found themselves relegated to competing in village fetes and church picnics instead.

UITGANG SORTIE
WAY OUT

Journalist Edgar Aaybe was an emergency replacement for an ill member of the combined Sweden/Denmark tug of war team in 1900 – he went on to win

Tug of war was dropped from the Olympics after 1920 in a purge that saw 33 events axed

LIVE PIGEON SHOOTING

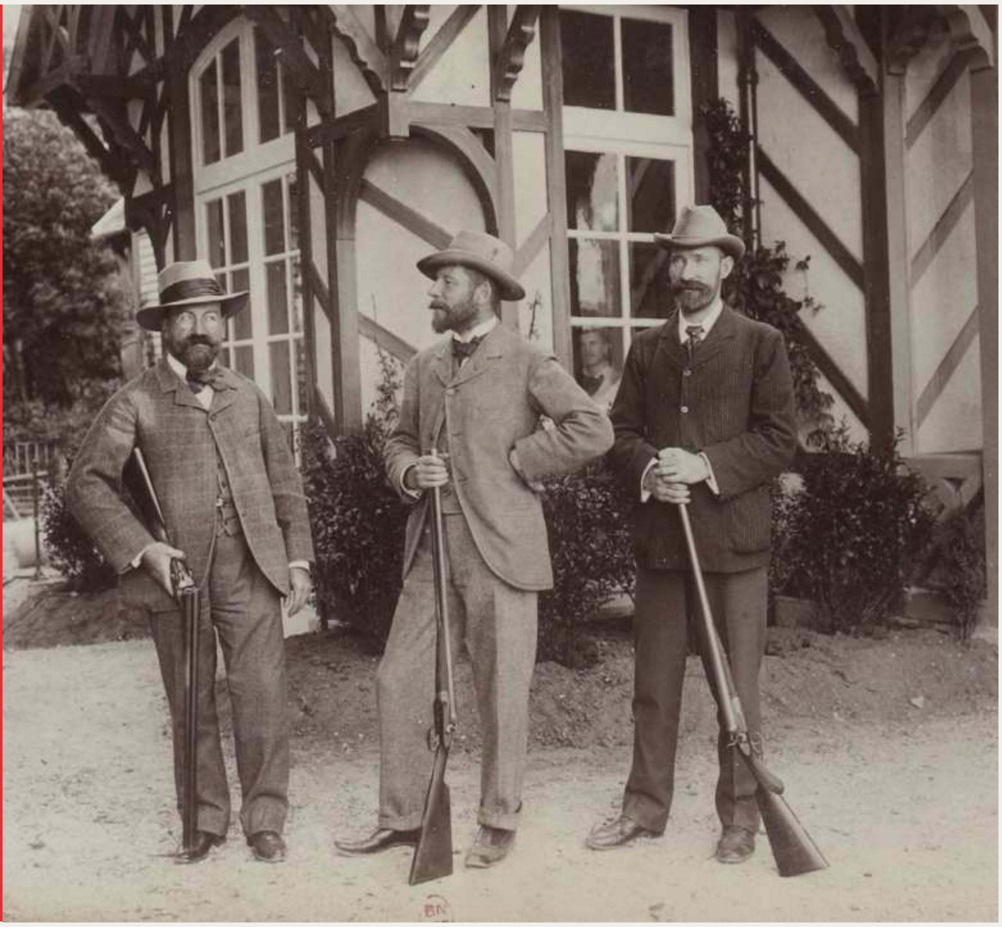
1900

Using clay targets for shooting was still a relatively new idea at the turn of the 20th century, so when the organisers of the 1900 Paris Exposition decided to include an event where shooters tried to hit flying targets, they went old school and used live pigeons.

The object was simple: hit as many birds as possible. Competitors had to pay to enter one of two events, the 20-franc Centenary Grand Prix or 200-franc Exposition Grand Prix, and battled to win a cash prize. Miss two birds and they were out. It was a profitable few days for Australian Donald Mackintosh, who triumphed in the Centenary and finished joint third in the Exposition, especially since the top four agreed to share the prize fund equally in the more expensive event.

Nearly 300 birds were killed and the shooting field resembled a feathery bloodbath by the end, an unfortunate look considering that animal rights campaigns were beginning to gain support. The only event in which animals were deliberately harmed did not feature in any subsequent Games and Olympic historians quietly dropped live pigeon shooting from the official medal records.

The Paris Exposition ran alongside the Olympic Games in 1900, leading to some confusion as to which competitors were Olympians and which were not



ROLLER HOCKEY

1992

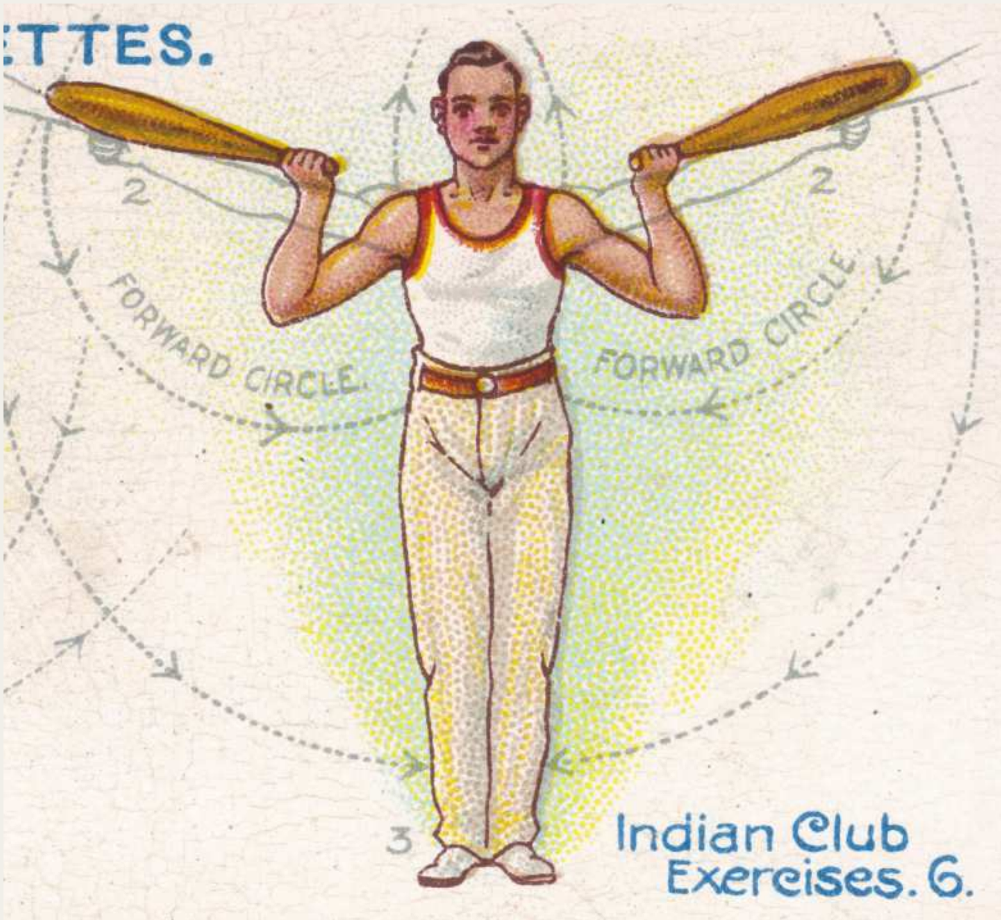
Roller hockey might not fully deserve its place on this list. It was not an official Olympic sport at Barcelona in 1992 but a demonstration sport, designed to raise awareness of a sport popular in the host country. Nevertheless, it was a great fan favourite. Five-man teams played on a wooden rink while wearing roller skates, and the rules were similar to ice hockey although far less violent than its frozen equivalent.

Twelve teams were split into two groups in a round-robin format. Poor Japan travelled from the other side of the world only to lose all five games with a cumulative score of 95-4. The reigning world champions, Portugal, only managed to make it to the bronze-medal match, where they were beaten by Italy. In the final, hosts Spain – where Catalonia is a hotbed of roller hockey – had to settle for silver after defeat by Argentina.

Roller hockey was one of the last demonstration sports; their inclusion stopped after 1992 as the Olympics grow ever larger and difficult to organise. Perhaps roller hockey will one day return as an official event. They could even invite fans on the rink at the end of the match for an almighty Seventies-style roller disco.

Demonstration sports over the years have included aeronautic gliding (1936), Australian rules football (1956) and water skiing (1972)

While no longer an Olympic sport, roller hockey is still played around the world



CLUB SWINGING

1904, 1932

Americans must really like swinging clubs. This odd gymnastic event appeared in only two Olympics, both in the States – St Louis in 1904 and Los Angeles in 1932 – and both times the podium was an all-American affair.

Competitors whirled two bowling-pin-shaped clubs around their head and body but, unlike juggling, the clubs did not leave the hands. The complicated, choreographed routines were a precursor to modern-day rhythmic gymnastics and judges rewarded technique, speed and stamina.

The first winner was Edward Hennig, who left St Louis with two gold medals after finishing top in the horizontal bar too. After a 28-year gap, the 1932 Games reintroduced club swinging under a new name, Indian clubs. Competing at the height of the Great Depression, unemployed gymnast George Roth recalled sneaking food out of the Olympic Village for his family in East Hollywood. After winning the Indian clubs gold medal, Roth walked out of the Olympic Stadium and hitchhiked home.

The hefty wooden clubs required competitors to have good arm and upper body strength. Perhaps club swinging will be the next fitness fad in exercise classes and gyms around the world.

Indian clubs are still used for training by wrestlers in Iran, where they are known as meels

TWO-HANDED JAVELIN

1912

Throwing the javelin sounds pretty simple, right? It must not have been complicated enough for the Olympic organisers because they tried to liven up the event in its early years. First they tried the freestyle javelin in 1908, allowing athletes to hold the javelin any way they wanted. That idea fell apart when Eric Lemming used a conventional hold anyway when he won gold.

Four years later, the Helsinki organisers tried a two-handed competition. Rather than flinging the javelin with both hands at once, athletes had three attempts with right hand and three attempts with left hand. Presumably the judges stood well back when the athletes threw with their weaker arm. The best distances with each hand were added together to give a cumulative score. The top three were supposed to take three more throws with each hand, but the Finnish throwers who made the final decided to let the results stand as they were.

Julius Saaristo won with a combined distance of 109.42 metres, a mark not that much farther than the current single-throw world record of 98.48. His right-handed 61.00 metres would have won the conventional javelin gold, although on that day he only managed 58.66 to take silver.

Eric Lemming throws a javelin in the 1912 Summer Olympics

Two-handed discus and two-handed shot put were also tried in the 1912 Olympics

© Alamy, Getty Images, Creative Commons: Gordon Morrison

The First Winter Olympics

The cold-weather accompaniment to the Summer Games was not officially an Olympics when it was first held

Words Edoardo Albert

These were the Olympic Games that weren't. What would later be designated as the first Winter Olympic Games, held from 25 January to 5 February 1924 in Chamonix, France, were not actually Olympic Games while they were being held. Instead, the competitors were taking part in an "international week of winter sport, part of a celebration of the Games of the VIII Olympiad". The event proved such a success that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) retrospectively designated the "international week of winter sport" the first Winter Olympics when in 1986, they decided there would be separate Summer and Winter Olympic Games (although until the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics, the two Games were held in the same year).

But in the first decades of the 20th century there was another set of winter games that looked likely to become the premier winter sports competition: the Nordic Games. Many of the sports represented in the Summer Olympics to this day have their origin in the ancient Olympic Games held in Greece: in particular, the track and field events, wrestling and boxing. But games held in the warmth of a Greek summer obviously had no place for winter sports (particularly when they were originally all done naked). But if the Summer Olympics have their origin in the sports of ancient Greece, the roots of the winter sports go back even further. The oldest ice skates date from about 5,000 years ago, their remains having been found throughout Scandinavia and northern Russia. Archaeologists think the first skates were probably made in what is today Finland; fitting, in that southern Finland has a greater area of lakes relative to land than anywhere else in the world and they all freeze solid in winter.

With such an ancient heritage of winter sports, the Scandinavians followed quickly in the wake of the IOC, holding the first Nordic Games in 1901 in Stockholm. The Nordic Games were also quickly harnessed to the idea of pan-Nordic nationalism that was stirring in these northern countries. Although Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland had often fought each other over the previous centuries, the reawakening of interest in the deep past that was a feature of the latter part of the 19th century had produced a general feeling that the Nordic countries shared a glorious past. The general sentiment was that they were distinguished in the present day by particular moral qualities and that their future would be glorious if only they could put aside

RIGHT **The British Curling team during the Winter Olympics at Chamonix, France**

petty bickering. The Nordic Games was both a product and a catalyst for such ideas. Having been designed to celebrate the achievements of the Nordic nations, the Nordic Games naturally featured the sports that their northern climates made possible: skiing, ski jumping, skating and ice hockey, and these all continue to feature in the modern Winter Olympics. However, there were some sports in the Nordic Games that were not taken over into the Olympics, including such unusual pursuits as reindeer-pulled skiing, horse-drawn skeleton sledging (a skeleton is a stripped-down sledge that looks like a tray on tracks), kicksled (a stand-up sledge propelled like a skateboard) and pulka racing (dog mushing where the dog pulls a sled and the human uses skis).

The outbreak of World War I gave the Nordic Games an advantage over the Summer Olympics. While the Games scheduled for 1916 had to be cancelled because most of the competitors were in trenches, the neutral Scandinavian countries were able to carry on playing sport and the 1917 Nordic Games went on as planned. The Nordic Games of 1922 also attracted a large contingent of non-Scandinavians for the first time; the bandwagon was picking up speed.

“It was no accident that the competition was held in Chamonix“

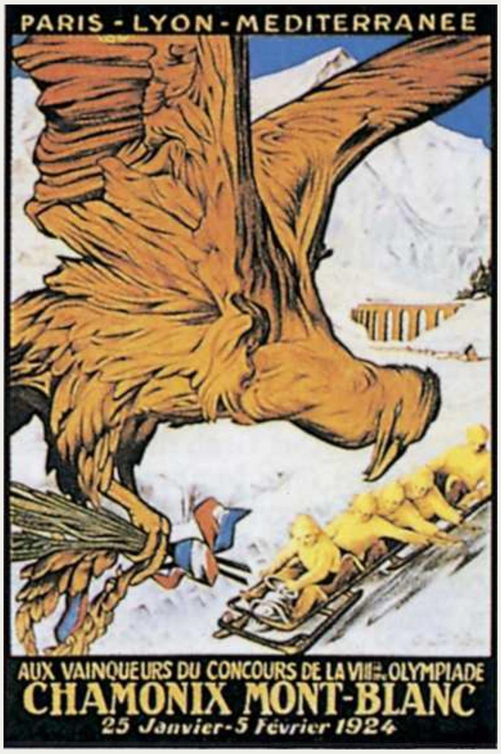
However, the success of the 1924 Olympic-sponsored games in Chamonix caused the IOC to change its charter in 1925 to include a Winter as well as a Summer Olympics, with both events to be held in the same year although in different venues. The Nordic Games continued, being held in 1926, but then it suffered two body blows from which it never recovered. First, in 1928, Viktor Balck, the Swedish driving force behind the competition, died, and then the Nordic Games scheduled for 1930 had to be cancelled due to lack of snow. Scandinavian competitors had already taken part in the second Winter Olympics, held in 1928 in St Moritz, Switzerland, and with no countervailing Nordic competition, the focus moved completely to the Olympics. The Olympic juggernaut now rolled through mountains and frozen lakes as well as running tracks and swimming pools.

That juggernaut was set rolling by the 1924 Chamonix Games. It was no accident that the competition was held in Chamonix: what had once been a small, hard-to-reach parish at the end of the Arve Valley had been planning its ascent for a long time. What had lifted Chamonix from obscurity was its view of Mont Blanc, the highest peak in the Alps. The idealisation of natural landscapes that formed such a large part of the Romantic movement saw Chamonix become a natural stop for rich travellers embarking on the Grand Tour. After the first ascent of Mont Blanc on 8 August 1786 by Jacques Balmat and Michel Paccard, the new sport of Alpinism – later to spread geographically into mountain climbing – began in earnest, with Chamonix at its centre.

ABOVE **The Canadian ice hockey team**

However, with the waning of Romanticism and the birth of mass tourism in the 19th century, Chamonix started to reposition itself as a tourist destination. A tourist board was formed in 1912 to promote the region and in 1921 the village officially renamed itself Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, ostensibly to prevent confusion with other places sharing the same name but in reality to ensure that the town was indissolubly tied in people's minds to the mountain. The marketing decision worked: to this day, Chamonix remains one of the premiere Alpine resorts, playing host to five million visitors each year.

In comparison to later extravaganzas, the opening ceremony for the “international week of winter sport” was a pretty straightforward affair: the competing athletes marched to the skating rink from Chamonix with a French marching band leading the way. There were around 250 athletes attending the games, coming from 16 countries and competing in 16 events. Of these 250 participants, just 11 were women and they were limited to only taking part in the figure skating competition.


PARIS - LYON - MEDITERRANEE
AUX VAINQUEURS DU CONCOURS DE LA VIIIme OLYMPIADE
CHAMONIX MONT-BLANC
25 Janvier-5 Février 1924

ABOVE **A poster advertising the winter sports festival in Chamonix**

The first event, held the day after the opening ceremony, was the 500-metre speed skating competition, which was unexpectedly won by the American, Charles Jewtraw. The skaters, competing in pairs, had to skate one-and-a quarter laps of the 400-metre track, their times being taken and the fastest being the winner. Jewtraw, racing in the 15th pair, recorded a time of 44 seconds to take gold. Following the Games, Jewtraw retired. His gold medal, the first awarded in the Winter Olympics, is on display at the Smithsonian Institution in the US.

The standout competitor of the Games was the Finn, Clas Thunberg. A speed skater, he won the gold medal in the 1,500 metres, the 5,000 metres and the all-round event, as well as silver in the 10,000 metres and bronze in the 500 metres. On skis, the Norwegian Thorleif Haug was dominant, winning the 18- and 50-kilometre cross-country events, and the Nordic-combined event, as well as coming fourth in the ski jump. Haug was originally given bronze in the ski jump and he kept it until his death in 1934. But then in 1974, historian Jakob Vaage realised that there had been an error in adding up the scores and that Haug had actually come fourth, 0.095 points behind the American, Anders Haugen. Having verified this, the IOC amended its records and in September 1974 the now 86-year-old Anders Haugen received his bronze medal from Anna Maria Magnussen, the youngest daughter of Haug.

BELOW Norwegian Jacob Tullin Thams takes off on his way to winning the ski jump gold medal

The gold in the ski jump was won by another Norwegian, Jacob Tullin Thams, who would go on to be one of a very small number of Olympians to win medals in both the Winter and Summer Games: in the 1936 Olympiad in Berlin, he took silver in the eight-metre sailing competition. In the solitary women's competition, figure skating, Austrian Herma Szabo won the gold medal with the judges all awarding first place.

The Games also saw the start of what would be a continuing Winter Olympic theme: the dominance of the Canadian ice hockey team. The Canadians won their first three matches without conceding a goal while scoring 85 goals themselves and finished the competition as gold-medal winners, having scored 122 goals and conceding only three. The final, in which the Canadians defeated the US team 6-1, was also characterised by another ongoing ice-hockey theme: rough play that saw a procession of players sin binned and retired hurt.

Despite attracting good crowds, the games made a big loss. Having cost an estimated three million francs, ticket receipts brought in only 250,000 francs. For Chamonix it nevertheless proved a worthwhile investment and the village, together with the local department of Haute-Savoie and the French state, made up the shortfall. The village had made the Games and the Games had made the village. It was the sort of Olympic return that the IOC would seek to emulate in future.

ABOVE The medallists in the figure skating competition. From left to right: Herma Szabo (Austria, gold), Ethel Muckelt (Britain, bronze) and Beatrix Loughran (USA, silver)

MOUNTAIN GOLD

Mountaineer George Mallory was awarded gold at the Games despite not actually taking part in them

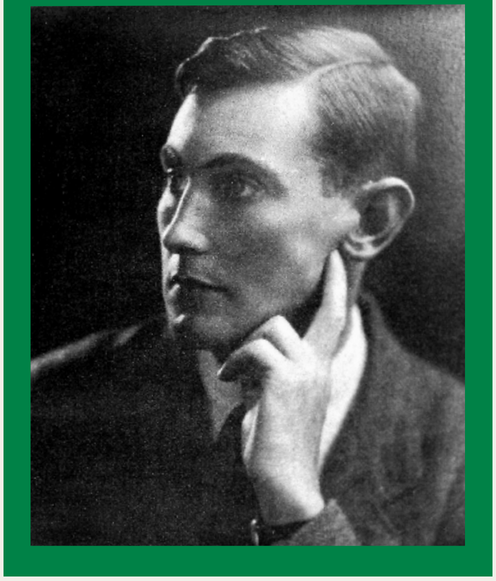
Scrolling through the list of medal winners at the 1924 Games, one name jumps out from the page: George Mallory. Gold. In Alpinism. Yes, it is that George Mallory, the legendary climber who took part in his third expedition to scale Mount Everest later in 1924, along with Andrew Irvine.

At the end of the Games, Pierre de Coubertin gave the gold medal for Alpinism to Lieutenant Colonel Edward Strutt and the men of the 1922 attempt to climb Everest in which Mallory played a leading role. On receiving the medals, Strutt promised that they would put their gold medals on the summit when they made a fresh attempt to climb Everest later that year.

Six months later, on 7 June, Mallory and Irvine set off from Camp 7 to make the final push for the summit. On 8 June, Noel Odell, another member of the Everest expedition, saw the clouds covering the summit clear and, staring up, he saw two tiny black specks moving upwards. It was the last time anyone saw them alive. Did they reach the top?

In 1999, the Mallory and Irvine Research Expedition found George Mallory's body. His corpse and effects had been preserved by the cold; there was no sign of the photograph of his wife that Mallory had said he would leave at the summit. So did they succeed? Were Mallory and Irvine the first men to climb Mount Everest? If Andrew Irvine's body is ever found, it might have the answer, for he was carrying the duo's camera. The question remains unanswered but we can hope that they did. For Mallory, when asked why he wanted to climb Mount Everest, gave the answer that has applied to mountaineers ever since: "Because it's there."

The mystery over whether George Mallory made it to the top of Everest still exists today



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The Nazi Olympics

For 16 days in the summer of 1936, the doors of the Third Reich opened to the world in one of the most memorable Olympics of all time

Words Jack Griffiths

On 26 April 1931, Berlin was pulled out of the hat at the 29th session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The city had been chosen to host the 11th modern Olympic games and the German bid had beaten Barcelona and Istanbul to the post. To the IOC, Weimar Germany was a perfect choice of venue. A country whose economy and social situation had ebbed and flowed since the guns went silent on the Western Front, an Olympics held in the heart of Europe would reap huge social and diplomatic benefits. However, just like the rest of the world, they could not have foreseen what would happen just under two years later.

The ascension of the Nazi Party to power in Germany in 1933 sent shockwaves around the world, not least to the IOC. News of strict racial laws had been filtering out of Germany and a mass boycott was on the cards. As a result, the IOC forced the Third Reich to tone down its extremist ideology and, on the surface at least, the Nazis complied. Adolf Hitler was no sports fan but Joseph Goebbels convinced the Führer that it was a unique opportunity to promote Aryan ideals across the globe. The stage was set for a Nazi Olympics and the triumphant return of a new Germany to the international community.

Germany had never held an Olympic Games before. Berlin had been chosen as the host of the 1916 games but it was scuppered by the escalation of World War I. The German Olympic Committee was intent on outshining the efforts of the Los Angeles 1932 games, which suffered poor attendances and troubled finances due to the Great Depression. Germany went all out in its preparations for the games with a new 100,000-seat stadium and 150 other Olympic buildings built especially for the event. The 'Olympiastadion' was one of the biggest stadiums in the world and part of the all-new Reich Sports Field complex.

Away from the impressive stadium complex, Berlin was being kitted out as a grand host city. Along the Unter den Linden Street and outside the Reich's Chancellery, huge statues were erected echoing classic Greek and Roman symbolism. The Berlin Summer Olympics was to be the first to be televised and benefited from the videography of Leni Riefenstahl, who was handed a cool $7 million and entrusted with a team of 33 camera operators to film the event. On arrival, the international media were no doubt impressed by the Nazi welcome, with transmitting vans and the equipment to broadcast in 28 languages, as well as Zeppelins to carry newsreel footage to other European cities for rapid transmission of events to more than 41 countries.

The acid test for the Germans was gaining the trust of the international community. Boycott threats came from the US, Britain, France, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands and Sweden. Even within Germany itself, not all were behind the idea of hosting the Olympics. This dissent

LEFT **The Olympic torch arrives at its final destination in Berlin, Germany, in 1936**

primarily came from the left wing of German politics with *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (*The Worker Illustrated*) firmly opposed. One man who did support American participation was the president of the United States Olympic Committee, Avery Brundage. Championing the idea that "the Olympic Games belong to the athletes and not the politicians", after a trip to Berlin he claimed that from what he had witnessed, Jews and other supposed enemies of the Nazi state were being treated fairly.

> **"The Americans ... refused to lower the Stars and Stripes to Hitler"**

Hitler and Minister of Propaganda Goebbels toned down their true intentions to Brundage and the watching world. Since the establishment of Nazi totalitarian control, all Jewish athletes had been banned from attending sporting facilities and expelled from competition. Come 1936, all traces of anti-Semitic propaganda had been hidden away and a false image of Nazi Germany successfully established. All anti-Semitic propaganda had been removed, Nazi tabloid *Der Stürmer* was taken off newsstands and Olympic flags hung in the streets beside swastikas. Even the SA brownshirts greeted visitors with an uncharacteristic friendly smile.

The Nazi hierarchy performed an elaborate cover up that even managed to hide the fact that the Jewish president of the German Olympic committee Dr Theodor Lewald had been replaced by SA member Hans von Tschammer und Osten, as well as the 600 Romani gypsies who had been arrested and forcibly relocated to the outskirts of Berlin between a cemetery and a sewage dump. With all these measures in place, the idea of a boycott melted away with only the Soviet Union (who had not been present at any of the Olympics it had been invited to) not attending what would be a world event. Goebbels had successfully drawn a curtain over the worst of Nazi oppression.

1936 saw the advent of the Olympic torch relay. The brainchild of sports administrator Carl Diem, 3,422 runners ran one kilometre each as the torch made the journey all the way from Olympia, Greece, the spiritual home of the Ancient Greek Olympics, to Berlin. The relay travelled through Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia, countries that would later side with the Axis or come under its occupation during World War II. The man who carried the flame for the final leg was Siegfried Eifrig, who personified the link the Nazis believed the Third Reich had with the great civilisations of antiquity.

ABOVE **The Hindenburg Zeppelin looms over the Olympiastadion, just under a year before its tragic demise**

ABOVE **The Berlin Olympic Stadium**

Tall, blonde and blue-eyed, he brought the torch into the Olympiastadion and the games got under way on 1 August.

The two anthems 'Deutschland über Alles' and 'Horst Wessel Lied' rang out around the stadium as the Hindenburg airship did a flyby in what was a tremendous yet carefully rehearsed spectacle. A key moment came later as Hitler raised his arm in salute. Athletes from roughly half of the countries involved - including Afghanistan, Austria, Bulgaria, Bolivia, Bermuda and Iceland - all saluted back while other nations including Britain and the US did not, receiving jeers from the largely German crowd in the process. The Americans even went one step further by refusing to lower the Stars and Stripes to Hitler, which infuriated the Führer. If the first day of the Olympics proved anything to the world, it was that the German people were seemingly devoted to the Nazi regime.

The day after the excitement of the opening ceremony, it was down to serious sporting business. The star of the show was undoubtedly

ABOVE American divers Dorothy Poynton-Hill and Velma Dunn smile for the camera with Käthe Koehler of Germany

ABOVE Prior to her work at the Olympics, Leni Riefenstahl had already directed the 1935 Nazi propaganda film *Triumph of the Will*

AN AMERICAN HERO

Jesse Owens's daughter, Marlene Rankin, explains how the Olympics changed her father's life

What do you know about the 1936 Olympics? Did your father talk about it?
Since I was not born then, I only know what I have read, seen on film, and gleaned from speeches I have heard my father make about his experience there.

In our home, the 1936 Olympics was not a topic of conversation. There was very little mention of it ever but there was always a room in the house where photos from it, and my father's trophies and medals, were displayed.

Do you think your father's achievements and contributions in Berlin have been remembered in the right spirit over the years?
I think that my father's achievements and contributions in Berlin have been remembered in the right spirit, depending on who you ask. He was a rather shy young man who was extremely talented athletically and who loved what he did. He went to the Olympics to compete with the best the world had to offer. He was a humble young man who believed in himself and his teammates and the promise of America. He was a team player and had a tremendous sense of fair play.

There are conflicting views over whether Adolf Hitler refused to shake your father's hand or acknowledged him in any way or not. Did Jesse ever speak of it and what is the truth?
I've heard my father say in speeches when asked the Hitler question: "I went to Berlin to run and not to shake hands with Hitler. I am here today and where Hitler is, I don't know or care." So I would conclude from that he did not shake hands with Hitler.

How do you think what happened at the 1936 Olympics changed your family's life?
What happened in the 1936 Olympics made Jesse Owens. He became a hero to the American Black Community, an international star for his athletic accomplishments, and a celebrity to the American community at large. As such, it shaped his life.

Though he never competed as an amateur athlete again, it placed him in an environment of opportunity that probably would not have been available to him had he not accomplished what he did in Berlin. His life became a series of tried opportunities that allowed him to find his strengths beyond athletics where he could make a living for himself and his family. His personality, charisma and new skills catapulted him into a celebrity life. The Jesse Owens Foundation was founded in 1980 after his untimely death by friends and family to perpetuate the spirit of Jesse Owens and his belief that the youth of any country is its greatest resource.

THE STARS OF BERLIN

The competitors who lit up the XI Olympiad

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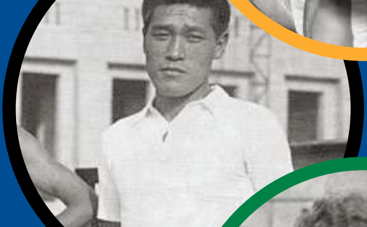

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01 HENDRIKA (RIE) MASTENBROEK

The first female athlete to win four medals at one Olympics, 17-year-old Mastenbroek was a talented Dutch swimmer at all strokes.

***Achievements** gold medal 100-metre freestyle, gold medal 400-metre relay, gold medal 400-metre freestyle, silver medal 100-metre backstroke*

02 HELENE MAYER

The only athlete with Jewish ancestry to make the German team, Mayer justified her selection with some skilled fencing, duelling with her rival Hungary's Ilona Schacherer.

***Achievement** silver medal fencing*

03 SOHN KEE-CHUNG

Long distance runner Sohn was a Korean forced to fun under the flag of Japan. He signed the Olympic roster with a Korean flag in defiance.

***Achievement** gold medal marathon*

04 JACK LOVELOCK

Kiwi John Edward Lovelock had a rivalry with American runner Glenn Cunningham and both jostled for the top spot at the 1936 Olympics, with Lovelock winning the battle.

***Achievement** gold medal 1,500 metres*

05 DHYAN CHAND

Considered one of the greatest field hockey players of all time, Indian Chand captained his nation and had already played in the 1928 and 1932 Olympics.

***Achievement** gold medal field hockey*

06 HELEN STEPHENS

Helen Stephens left the 1936 Olympics undefeated and with two gold medals. She later served in the US Marine Corps during World War II.

***Achievements** gold medal 100 metres, gold medal 4x100-metre relay*

07 MAJORIE GESTRING

At the tender age of just 13, American Gestring wowed the German crowds and became the youngest ever female Olympic champion at women's springboard diving.

***Achievement** gold medal women's springboard diving*

08 INGE SØRENSEN

Even younger than Gestring was 12-year-old Inge Sørensen, who managed a bronze medal in swimming for her native Denmark.

***Achievement** bronze medal 200-metre breaststroke*

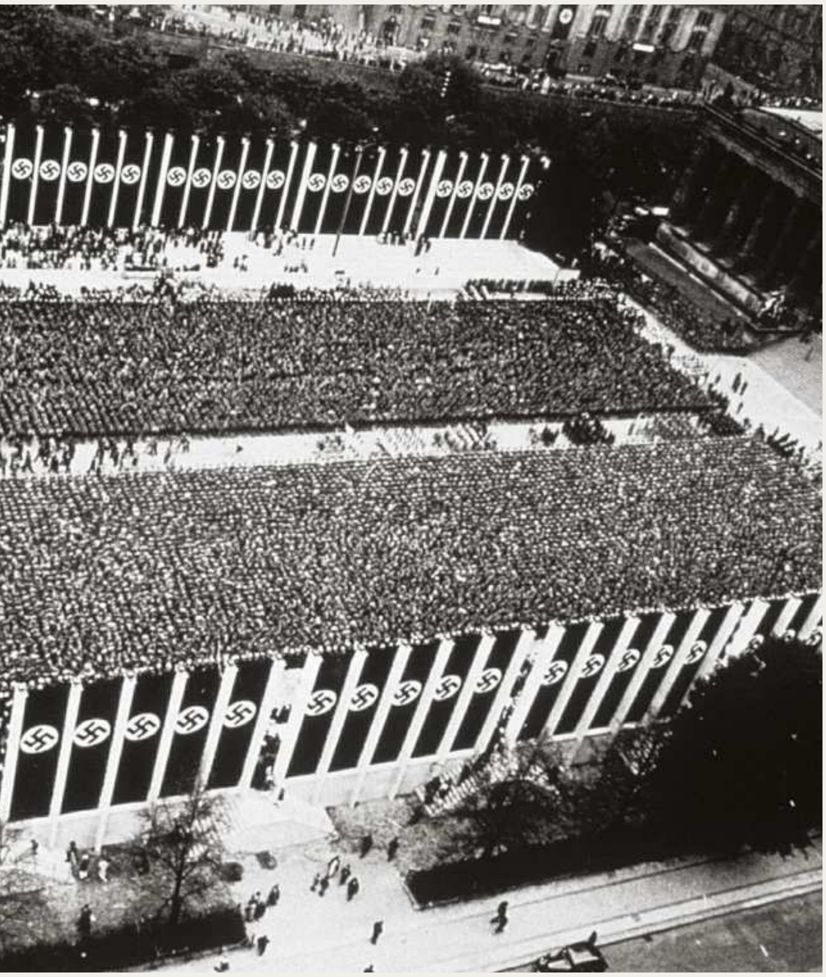
09 LUZ LONG

The German Olympian is remembered for his battles with American Jesse Owens. Hitler was incensed at the two Olympians being arm in arm during the awards ceremony.

***Achievement** silver medal long jump*

Jesse Owens, who would win four gold medals in the 100 metres, 200 metres, 4x100-metre relay and long jump. The African-American's exploits infuriated Hitler and he was labelled 'Negro Owens' by the German media, with all US black competitors branded 'Black Auxiliaries'. The German people, however, were the polar opposite to the journalists, and chanted Owens's name from the stands and pestered him for autographs at any opportunity. The Berlin Olympics was also the first year that basketball was played at a Games, and it was won by the US, who began their domination of the sport, beating Canada 19-8 in the final.

Despite not selecting world-class athletes such as tennis ace Daniel Prenn and formidable boxer Erich Seelig due to their Jewish roots, the Germans finished top of the medals table for the first and only time with a haul of 89 medals, far ahead of the US in second place with 56. It wasn't just the Germans not picking their competitors on talent alone though. American Jews Marty Glickman and Sam Stoller were both told they would not be running in the 4x100-metre relay and watched on as their nation triumphed with gold. Rumours persist that Brundage pressured the US coaching team to drop the two men, allegedly



LEFT **Goebbels and his propaganda machine were intent on making the Olympics a spectacle that showed off the Third Reich to the world**

BELOW **Hitler was initially sceptical of Nazi Germany hosting the games but saw it as an opportunity to further his twisted ideology**

in fear of upsetting Hitler. Hungary trailed Germany and the US in third place with ten golds, while Britain could only manage tenth place. Japan was the only other nation other than the US to break a European monopoly of the podium. A sad story to come from the Olympics was the death of Romanian boxer Nicolae Berechet. After being knocked out in the first round of the featherweight competition, he died mysteriously of blood poisoning a few days later.

Away from the hubbub of the Olympiastadion, IOC president Henri de Baillet-Latour laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. 1 August 1936 came days after the 22nd anniversary of the deployment of troops in the European theatre of World War I. The symbolism of this action was to demonstrate peace, making the outbreak of war three years later all the more tragic. A flamboyant opening ceremony and gestures of peace had given the world false hope of a peaceful and non-aggressive Nazi Germany.

The Berlin Olympic Games closed its doors on 16 August. Hitler's Germany had succeeded in hosting an event that portrayed the Third Reich in a positive light to the international community, and the German victory in the medals table was a huge propaganda boost to the Nazi Party and their Aryan ideals. Leni Riefenstahl shot a staggering 305,000 metres of film, which then took a painstaking 18 months to edit. The result was the four-hour film *Olympia*, released in April 1938, and it showcased just how the Olympics was taken and manipulated to uphold Nazi Aryan thought.

> "The Germans finished top of the medals table for the first and only time"

Hitler may not have been a sports fan, but he was so impressed with the Games that he reportedly claimed: "In 1940, the Olympic Games will take place in Tokyo but thereafter they will take place in Germany for all time to come." Architect Albert Speer was even tasked with designing a 400,000-seat stadium for every future Olympics in Berlin, plans that would have been put in motion had Nazi Germany been triumphant in World War II.

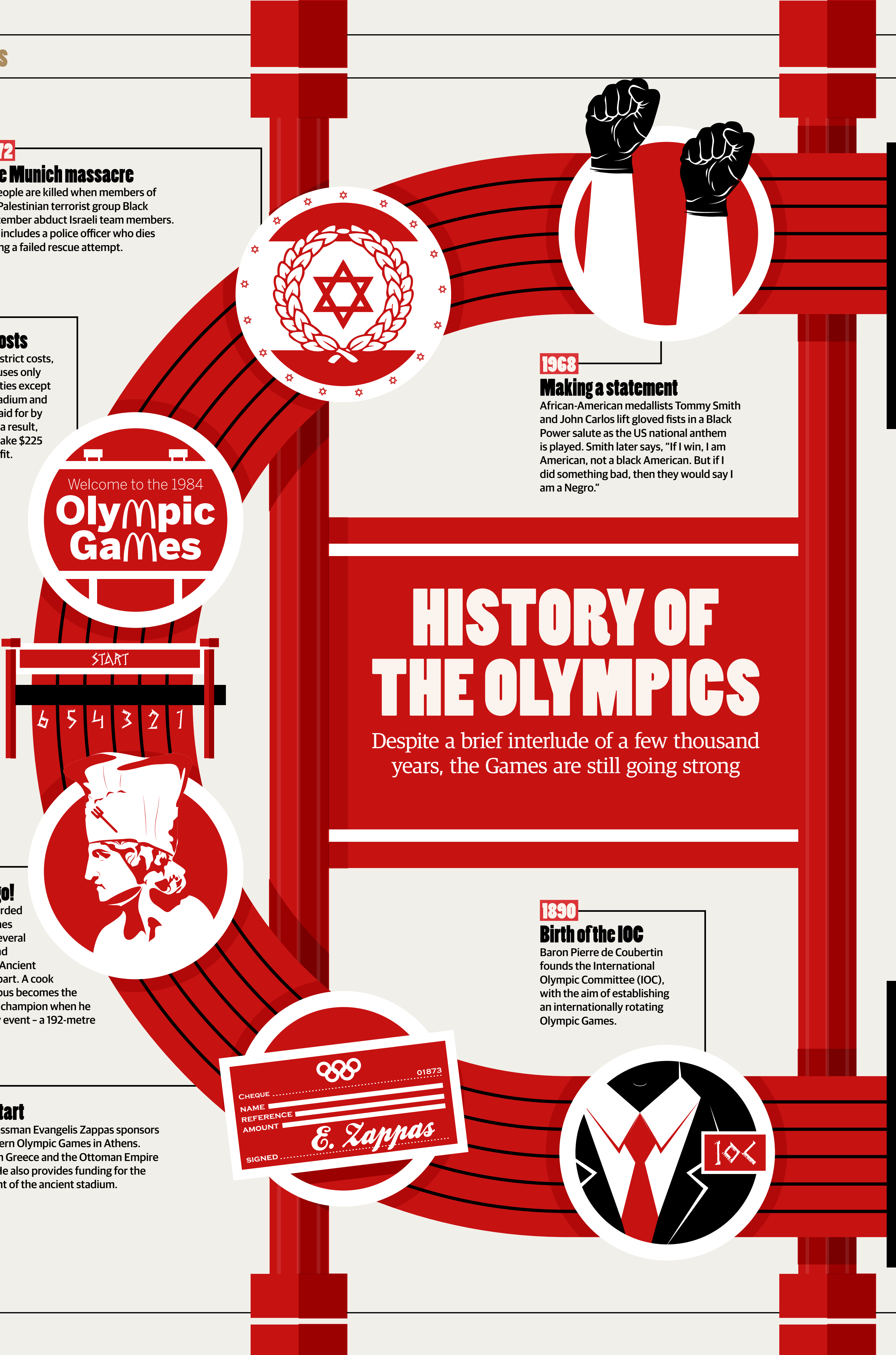
The Olympic ideals of international co-operation may have been against what the Führer stood for, but even a national socialist despot now understood the political vehicle that the Olympics had been for Nazi Germany. The success of the Olympic Games was a huge propaganda boost for Germany, and along with the Italian victories in both the 1934 and 1938 Football World Cups, helped prove that these new dictatorships could rival traditional democracies on the playing field.

Just two days after the end of the Games, the Nazi Party was rocked by the death of Captain Wolfgang Fürstner, the head of the Olympic Village. Although the story was initially covered up, it was revealed that the Jewish Fürstner had committed suicide after learning he would be a victim of the returning Nuremberg Laws. The brains behind the expertly designed Village had been forced to play second fiddle to the non-Jewish Werner Gilsa, and although the laws had been toned down during the Olympics, they were to be implemented once again.

In the coming years, the Third Reich unleashed the fury of the Wehrmacht on the world and any social progress made during the spectacle that was the 1936 Berlin Olympics was lost. War was brewing, and attention soon turned from the track to the battlefield as the clouds of conflict once again amassed over Europe.

HISTORY OF THE OLYMPICS

Despite a brief interlude of a few thousand years, the Games are still going strong



776 BCE

Get set, go!

The first recorded Olympic Games take place. Several city-states and kingdoms of Ancient Greece take part. A cook called Coroebus becomes the first Olympic champion when he wins the only event – a 192-metre running race.

1859

A fresh start

Greek businessman Evangelis Zappas sponsors the first modern Olympic Games in Athens. Athletes from Greece and the Ottoman Empire participate. He also provides funding for the refurbishment of the ancient stadium.

1890

Birth of the IOC

Baron Pierre de Coubertin founds the International Olympic Committee (IOC), with the aim of establishing an internationally rotating Olympic Games.

1968

Making a statement

African-American medallists Tommy Smith and John Carlos lift gloved fists in a Black Power salute as the US national anthem is played. Smith later says, "If I win, I am American, not a black American. But if I did something bad, then they would say I am a Negro."

1972

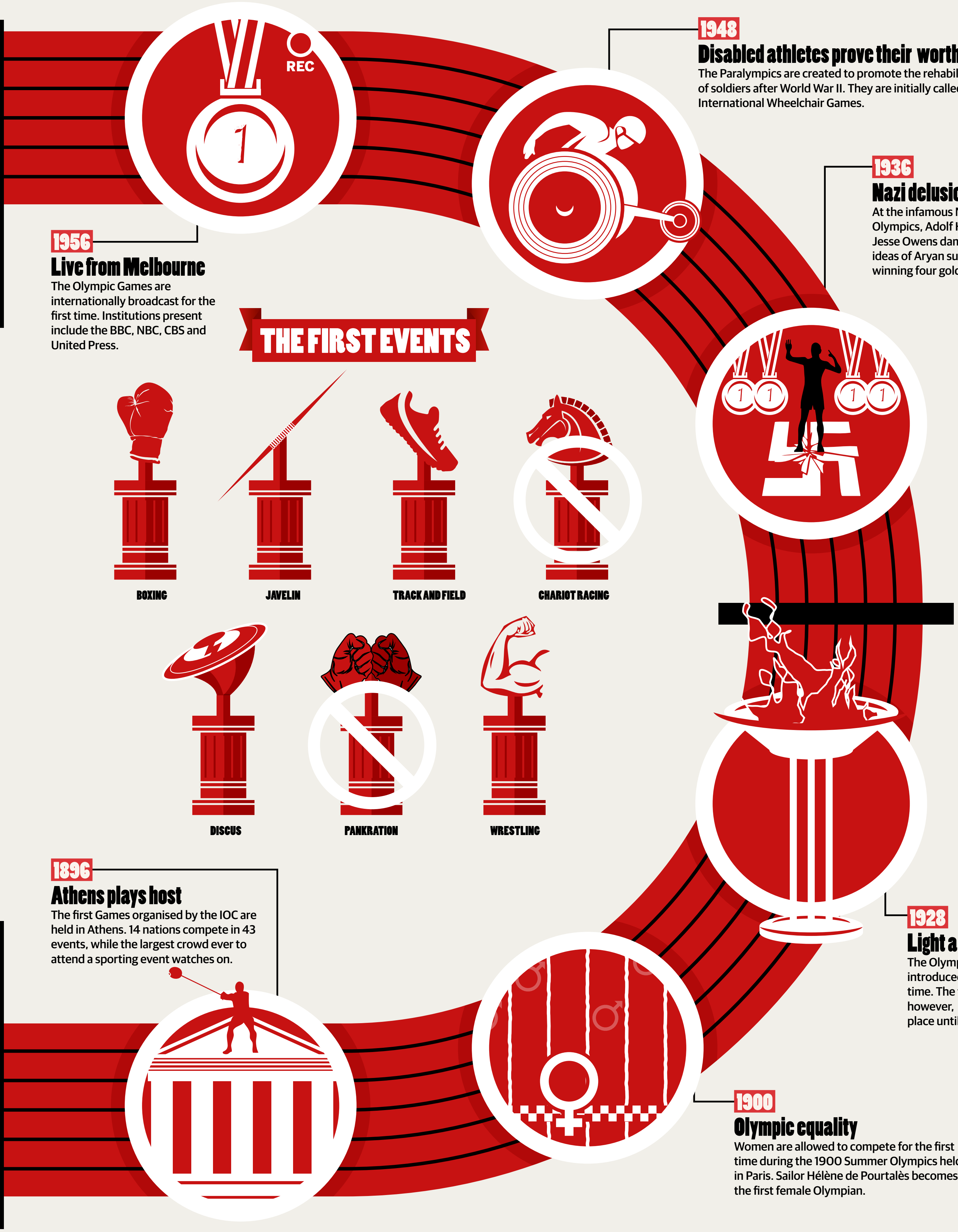
The Munich massacre

17 people are killed when members of the Palestinian terrorist group Black September abduct Israeli team members. This includes a police officer who dies during a failed rescue attempt.

1984

Thrifty hosts

In order to restrict costs, Los Angeles uses only existing facilities except for a swim stadium and velodrome paid for by sponsors. As a result, the Games make $225 million in profit.



1896

Athens plays host

The first Games organised by the IOC are held in Athens. 14 nations compete in 43 events, while the largest crowd ever to attend a sporting event watches on.

1900

Olympic equality

Women are allowed to compete for the first time during the 1900 Summer Olympics held in Paris. Sailor Hélène de Pourtalès becomes the first female Olympian.

1928

Light a fire

The Olympic flame is introduced for the first time. The torch relay, however, will not take place until 1936.

1936

Nazi delusions

At the infamous Nazi Olympics, Adolf Hitler watches Jesse Owens damage his ideas of Aryan supremacy by winning four gold medals.

1948

Disabled athletes prove their worth

The Paralympics are created to promote the rehabilitation of soldiers after World War II. They are initially called the International Wheelchair Games.

1956

Live from Melbourne

The Olympic Games are internationally broadcast for the first time. Institutions present include the BBC, NBC, CBS and United Press.

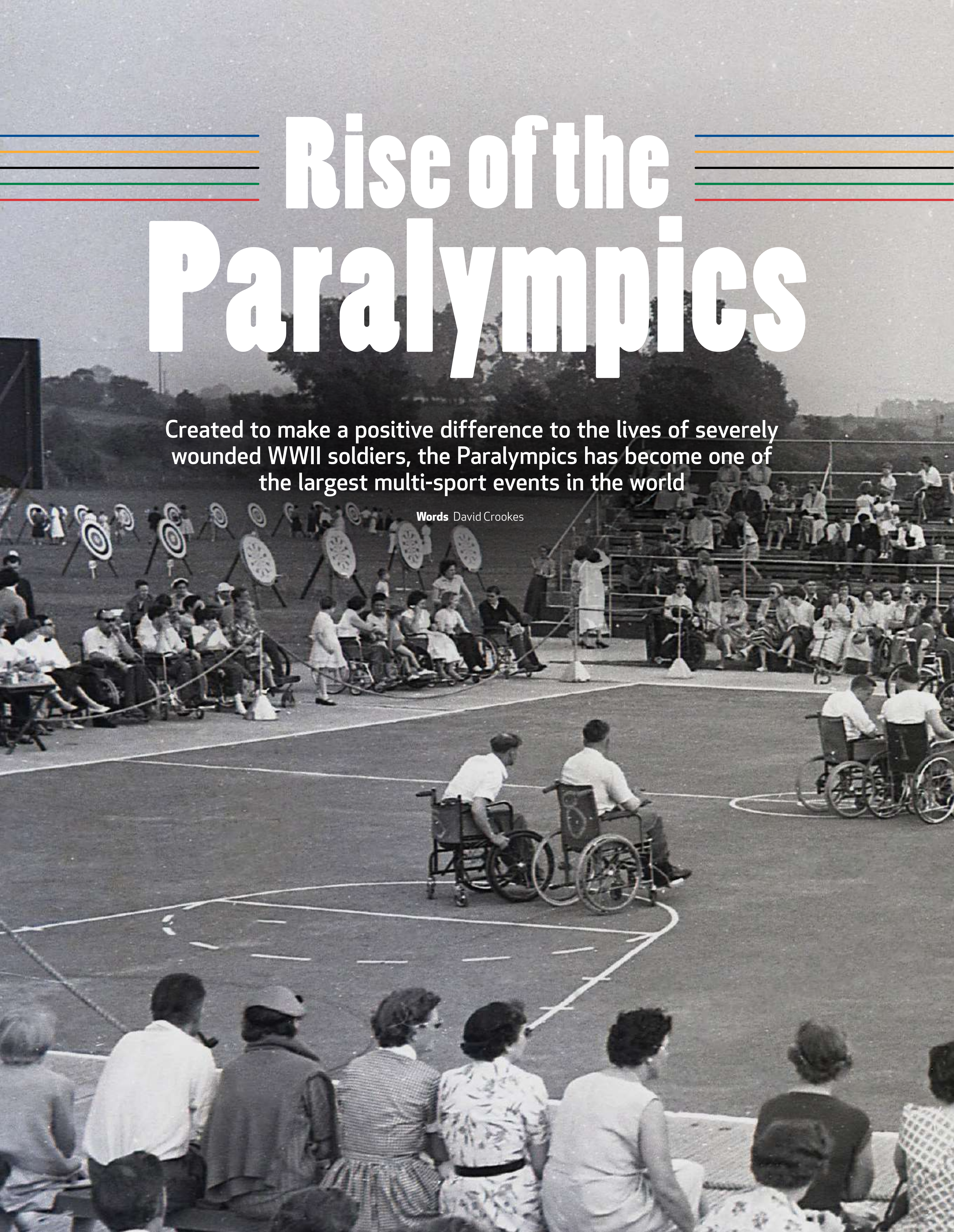
THE FIRST EVENTS

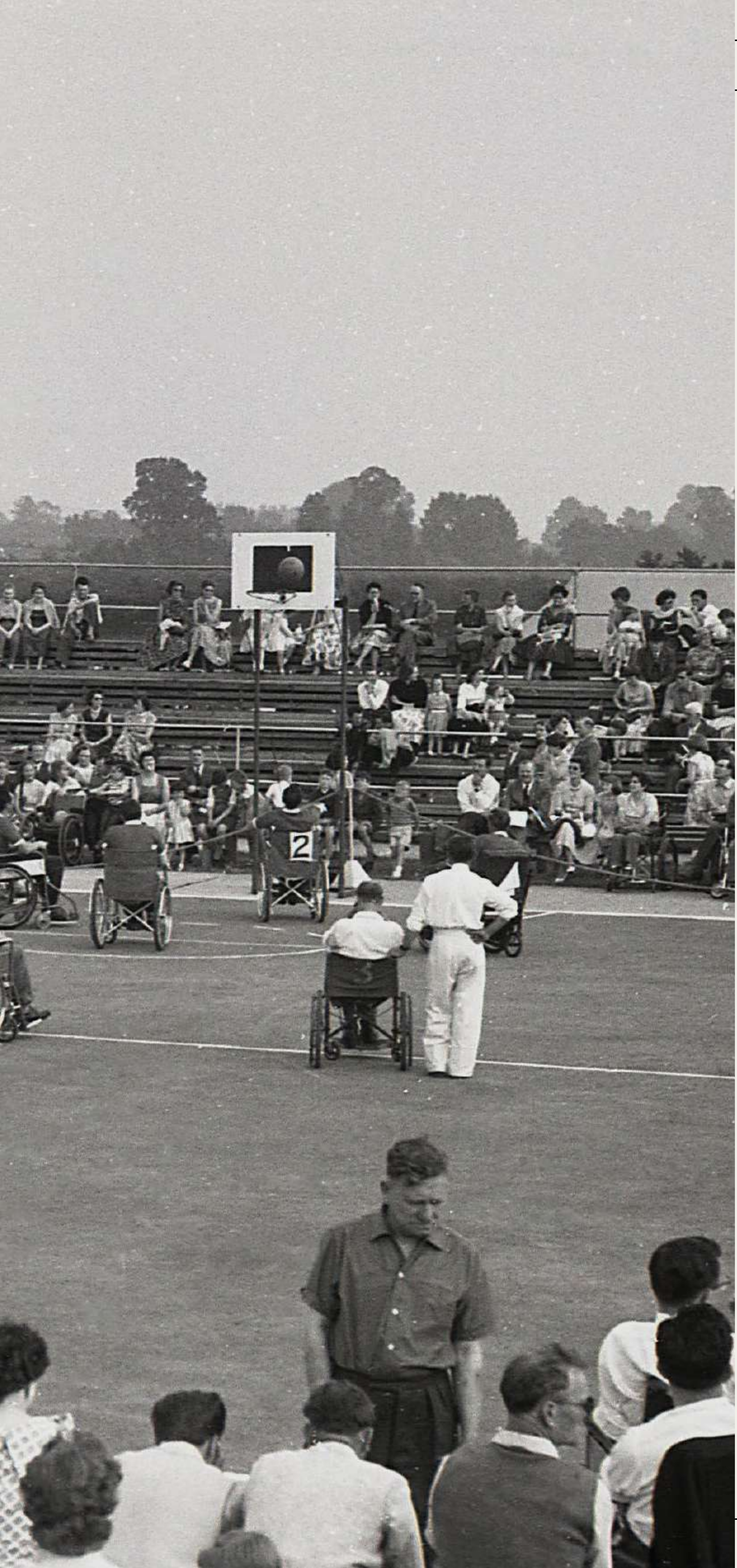
© Alamy, Getty Images, Rex Features, Marcus Faint

Rise of the Paralympics

Created to make a positive difference to the lives of severely wounded WWII soldiers, the Paralympics has become one of the largest multi-sport events in the world

Words David Crookes





Dr Ludwig Guttman was an intelligent, caring man who believed sport could change the lives of people with disabilities. As one of Germany's leading neurologists, he had been working as the first assistant to the pioneering professor Otfrid Foerster at a top German hospital. But then the Nazi Party rose to power in 1933 and his life would be turned upside down.

The Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935 stripped German Jews of many rights. As a consequence, Dr Guttman was dismissed from his post because Jewish doctors were not allowed to practice professionally. He was placed at the Jewish Hospital in Breslau and became its medical director in 1937. There, his compassion and courage was witnessed first hand.

On 9 November 1938 when Jewish property was destroyed and 30,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps, Dr Guttman ordered that anyone seeking refuge at the hospital be admitted as patients. Of the 64 admissions, 60 were saved from the camps as Dr Guttman managed to convince the Gestapo and SS that they were sick. It was risky but such was his reputation, he was able to escape repercussions.

Indeed, a month later, Dr Guttman was ordered to treat a friend of the Portuguese dictator António de Oliveira Salazar in Lisbon, Portugal. Before returning to Germany, he was allowed to visit England where he discovered the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning had organised visas for him and his family. As such, they emigrated on 14 March 1939. Six months later, the Second World War began.

This story is an important one, especially so for the Paralympic Games. For it was Dr Guttman who organised the first sports competition that led to its creation. The British Government had invited him to set up a spinal injuries unit at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Aylesbury, England, which opened in 1944 and revolutionised the care of paralysed British soldiers returning from the war. Not only that, he looked to give these men a sense of pride, achievement and hope.

When the Olympic Games was hosted in London in 1948, Dr Guttman got into the spirit of the occasion by organising an archery competition at the hospital. He named it the Stoke Mandeville Games and it saw 16 spinal patients – 14 ex-servicemen and two ex-servicewomen – competing for honours on 28 July, the day before the London Olympics began. "It was a demonstration to the public that competitive sport is not the prerogative of the able-bodied," Dr Guttman said.

The Stoke Mandeville Games then became an annual occasion, turning international in 1952 when – in the year the Olympic Games was held in Helsinki – a Dutch team from the Doorn Military Rehabilitation Centre in Aardenburg in the Netherlands decided to compete as well. Four Dutch athletes, accompanied by a nursing sister and a physiotherapist, brought the total number

LEFT **Competitors with spinal injuries take part in the Stoke Mandeville Games' basketball competition**

of competitors to 130. They competed in javelin, netball, snooker, table tennis and a demonstration of club swinging. Dr Guttman hoped the "paraplegic games" would one day become as big as the Olympics.

The event continued to be held at Stoke Mandeville, growing in 1954 to encompass paraplegic participants in 14 countries and expanding with 200 athletes from 18 countries the following year.

In 1956, the International Stoke Mandeville Games, as it was now known, coincided with the Olympic Games in Melbourne, Australia. The same year, the International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee was created and it was decided that, as of 1960, the event should take place in the host cities of the Olympic Games. As such, the first Paralympic Games are said to have been held in Rome, Italy. But it would be some time before the competition was officially given that name.

In Rome, the event followed the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games and involved 400 athletes from 23 countries. After the opening ceremony was watched by a crowd of 5,000 in the Acqua Acetosa Stadium, the action moved to the Tre Fontane Sports Zone, a 40-minute drive away, where spectators would watch six sports - archery, Para athletics, dartchery, snooker, wheelchair fencing and wheelchair basketball.

Para swimming (including 50-metre events for the first time) were held in the Olympic Games' Piscina Foro Italia warm-up pool. Table tennis (with a separate event for women) was held at the Olympic Village Club House. All of the competitors had spinal cord injuries and 291 medals were awarded in total. Yet the event, held between 18 and 25 September, also placed a spotlight on the difficulties faced by people with disabilities.

Travel to Rome wasn't entirely smooth: forklift trucks were used to get people in wheelchairs on to aeroplanes. The athletes' village was not entirely wheelchair-accessible either thanks to the presence of 20-step staircases between floors. But they were problems the organisers looked to address and a successful second Games were held in Tokyo in 1964.

Unfortunately, despite the Olympics being hosted by Mexico City in 1968, the Paralympics in that year ended up in Tel Aviv because the Mexican government had decided, two years earlier, that it couldn't stage the event

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ABOVE **April Holmes of the United States wins gold in Beijing 2008 in the final of the Women's 100 metres T44 Athletics event at the National Stadium**

BELOW **Dr Ludwig Guttman founded the National Spinal Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in 1944 and went on to lay the foundations for the Paralympic Games four years later**

SWIMMING TO SUCCESS

There have been many successful Paralympians but none more so that Trischa Zorn

Born blind due to a genetic disorder, Trischa Zorn is the most successful athlete the Paralympic Games has ever seen. Having competed in seven Games - 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004 - which is an impressive feat in itself, the American swimmer finished her career with 41 gold, nine silver and five bronze medals: a whopping 55 in all.

She made a strong impression from the start, winning seven gold medals in Arnhem in 1980, five of which were individual. She matched that feat in New York four years later but bagged 12 (ten individual) golds in Seoul in 1988. Zorn also went on to top the individual medal table in Barcelona and the overall table in Atlanta.

Without discrediting any other athlete, the next most successful - swimmer Béatrice Hess of France - won 25 medals in total, 20 of which were gold. As such, it's going to be a while before someone beats Zorn's tally, which she achieved in breaststroke, freestyle, backstroke, butterfly, individual medley, two different relay types and over varying distances. Her amazing medal haul ensured she took a very deserved place in the International Paralympian Hall of Fame in 2012.

Trischa Zorn winning silver in the Women's 100-metre breaststroke SB12 final at Sydney 2000

BELOW Competitors with spinal injuries take part in the Stoke Mandeville Games' archery competition

due to technical difficulties. It then became commonplace for the event to be staged in a different location. Munich, for instance, staged the Olympics in 1972 but West Germany hosted the Paralympics beforehand in Heidelberg, a good three-and-a-half-hour drive away.

Toronto hosted the 1976 Paralympic Games, with the Olympics held over in Montreal. But the Games themselves flourished. In Toronto, more disabilities were included: there were 261 athletes with an amputation and 187 athletes with visual impairment taking part. With 13 sports, 1,657 Para athletes and 40 countries involved, these Games were bigger than ever. Some 24,000 people packed the Woodbine Racetrack for the opening ceremony and the competition was broadcast on television for the very first time. Dr Guttman's dream was coming true, although there was still some way to go.

> "Countries hosting the Olympics now dearly wanted to hold the Paralympics"

In 1976, the Winter Paralympic Games made their debut, in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden, and it, too, became a regular competition from that point on. But it also became clear that greater co-ordination was going to be needed as the Paralympic Games grew and sought to be seen as equal to its Olympic counterpart. There was a strong desire for the host cities of the Olympics to once again also hold the Paralympics, but it took some time to get to that point.

In 1980, the Paralympics were in Arnhem, Netherlands, while the Olympics were in Moscow. Los Angles enjoyed the Olympics in 1984 but the Paralympics were split between New York and Stoke Mandeville. The Soviet Union and many other communist countries boycotted these Games, with the Russians going as far to say that there were no people with disabilities in the country. Yet the Soviet Union did complete in 1988 - the year Seoul held the Summer Olympics and ran the Paralympics straight after using the same infrastructure and facilities.

This was a key moment for the Paralympics and it was thanks to the determination of the International Co-ordination Committee of World Sports Organisations for the Disabled (ICC). Its role was taken on by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) from 1989 but from that point, all the event - now officially known as the Paralympic Games - began using the same stadiums and venues as the Olympics.

Barcelona did so in 1992 and sports fans were hugely enthusiastic as the event offered tickets for free and fans packed the venues. Daily coverage was also broadcast on TV and those who tuned in were not disappointed, as 279 world and 489 Paralympic records were broken that year. Giving away tickets was a promotional boost that worked wonders. The Paralympics was truly established.

In 1996, Atlanta's Paralympic Games increased the number of sports to 19 and it also attracted top name sponsorship. In Sydney in 2000, 1.2 million tickets were sold. Countries hosting the Olympics now dearly wanted to hold the Paralympics and it formally became a prerequisite for all bidding cities. As it stands, this has to be the case until 2032, and it's likely to continue for much longer than that.

And why not? Athens in 2004 was a major success; Beijing in 2008 was spectacular and it even encouraged the Chinese government to better protect people with disabilities. "In China, the Games were really a transformation tool for changing attitudes across the board in China towards people with disability, to building accessibility facilities in the city, to changing laws to allow people with a disability to be part of society," said Xavier Gonzalez, CEO of the IPC.

As expected, London 2012, in bringing the Paralympics back to its original home, was keen to promote the event and one million tickets were sold a year before it even began. Gonzalez said it was the "first truly global Paralympics" and it paved the way for Rio de Janeiro to take the baton and run with it in 2016.

Now all eyes are on Tokyo, which is hosting 537 Paralympic events and 22 sports, including the addition of badminton and taekwondo between 24 August and 5 September 2021. An estimated TV audience of 4.25 billion is set to watch the events and they're in for a real treat. For in many ways, Tokyo is going to epitomise Dr Guttman's dream more than ever before by showing determination and ambition.

As the IPC President Andrew Parsons said in his New Year's message ahead of the Paralympics: "I think it will be remembered forever in the history books - not only in the history books of sport - but in the history books of humanity. Imagine people thinking [20 years in the future] if these guys did that in that year, we can do anything we set our minds."

ABOVE Eleanor Simmonds of Great Britain wins silver in the Women's 100-metre freestyle at the London 2012 Paralympic Games

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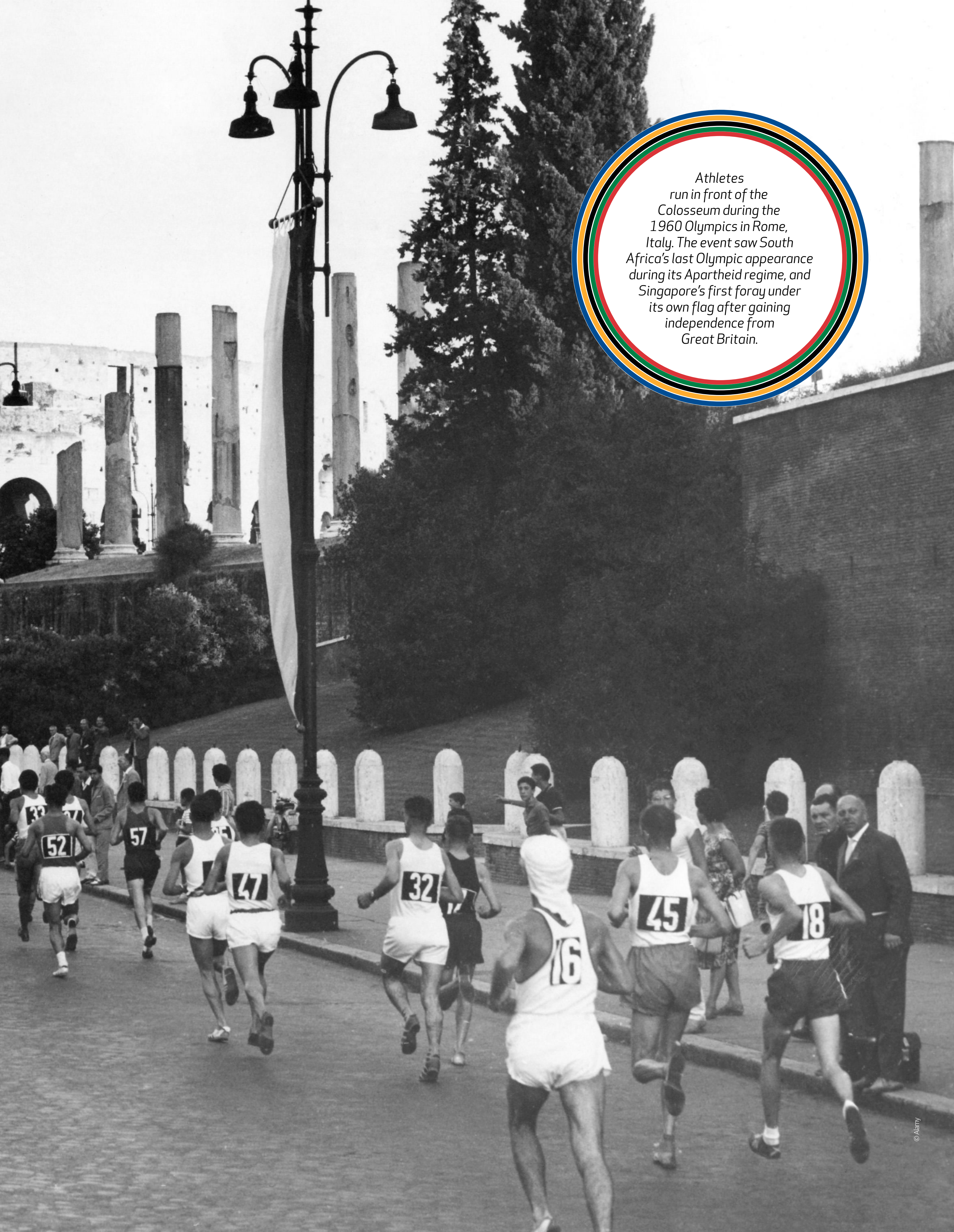

Athletes run in front of the Colosseum during the 1960 Olympics in Rome, Italy. The event saw South Africa's last Olympic appearance during its Apartheid regime, and Singapore's first foray under its own flag after gaining independence from Great Britain.

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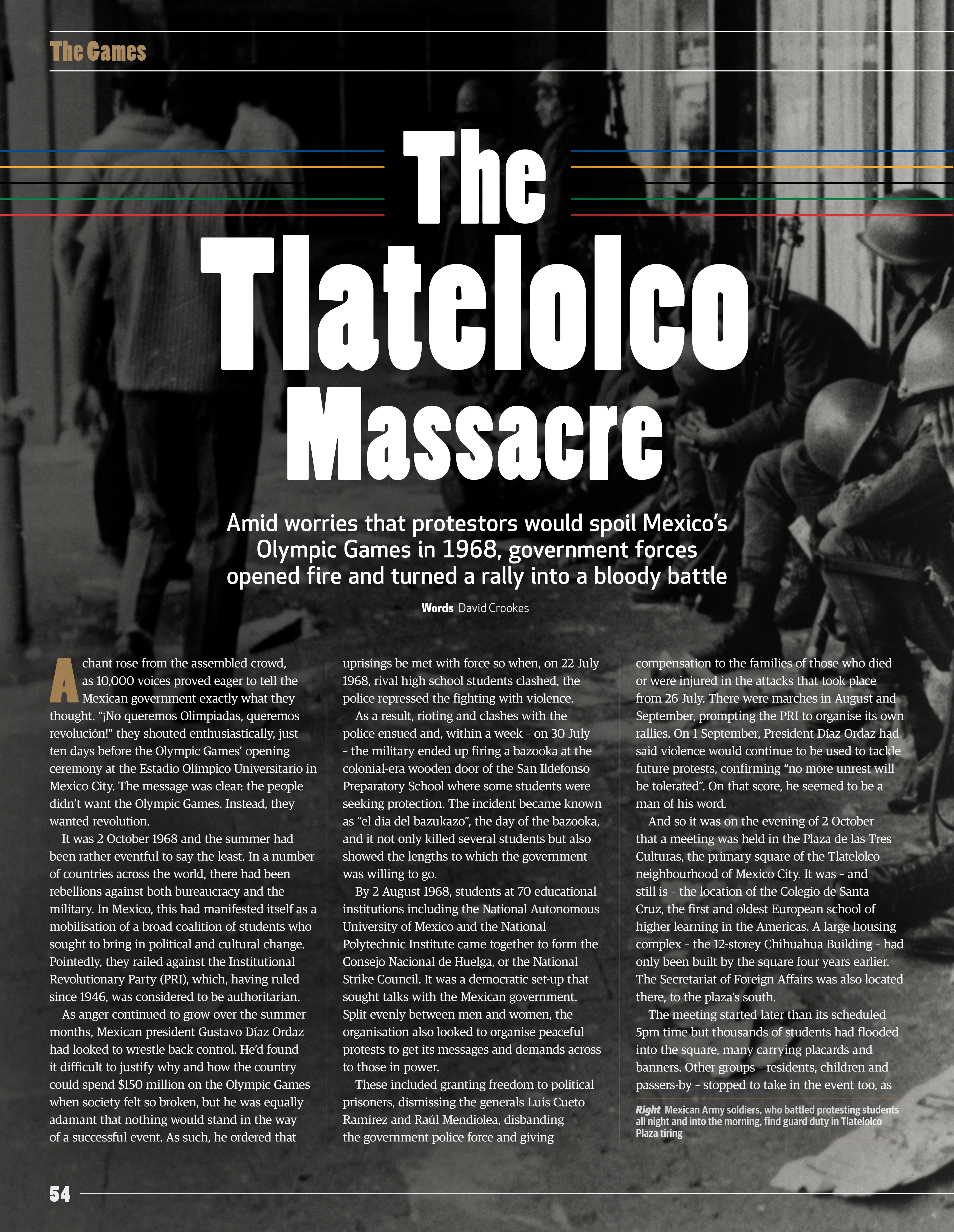


The Tlatelolco Massacre

Amid worries that protestors would spoil Mexico's Olympic Games in 1968, government forces opened fire and turned a rally into a bloody battle

Words David Crookes

A chant rose from the assembled crowd, as 10,000 voices proved eager to tell the Mexican government exactly what they thought. "¡No queremos Olimpiadas, queremos revolución!" they shouted enthusiastically, just ten days before the Olympic Games' opening ceremony at the Estadio Olímpico Universitario in Mexico City. The message was clear: the people didn't want the Olympic Games. Instead, they wanted revolution.

It was 2 October 1968 and the summer had been rather eventful to say the least. In a number of countries across the world, there had been rebellions against both bureaucracy and the military. In Mexico, this had manifested itself as a mobilisation of a broad coalition of students who sought to bring in political and cultural change. Pointedly, they railed against the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which, having ruled since 1946, was considered to be authoritarian.

As anger continued to grow over the summer months, Mexican president Gustavo Díaz Ordaz had looked to wrestle back control. He'd found it difficult to justify why and how the country could spend $150 million on the Olympic Games when society felt so broken, but he was equally adamant that nothing would stand in the way of a successful event. As such, he ordered that uprisings be met with force so when, on 22 July 1968, rival high school students clashed, the police repressed the fighting with violence.

As a result, rioting and clashes with the police ensued and, within a week - on 30 July - the military ended up firing a bazooka at the colonial-era wooden door of the San Ildefonso Preparatory School where some students were seeking protection. The incident became known as "el día del bazukazo", the day of the bazooka, and it not only killed several students but also showed the lengths to which the government was willing to go.

By 2 August 1968, students at 70 educational institutions including the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the National Polytechnic Institute came together to form the Consejo Nacional de Huelga, or the National Strike Council. It was a democratic set-up that sought talks with the Mexican government. Split evenly between men and women, the organisation also looked to organise peaceful protests to get its messages and demands across to those in power.

These included granting freedom to political prisoners, dismissing the generals Luis Cueto Ramírez and Raúl Mendiolea, disbanding the government police force and giving compensation to the families of those who died or were injured in the attacks that took place from 26 July. There were marches in August and September, prompting the PRI to organise its own rallies. On 1 September, President Díaz Ordaz had said violence would continue to be used to tackle future protests, confirming "no more unrest will be tolerated". On that score, he seemed to be a man of his word.

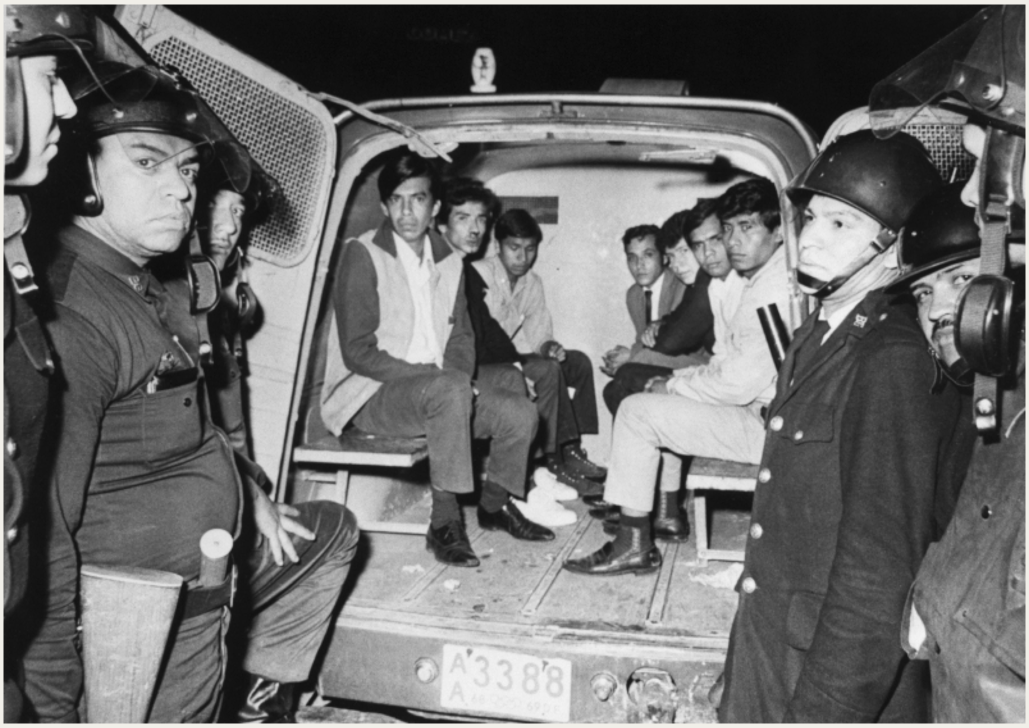
And so it was on the evening of 2 October that a meeting was held in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, the primary square of the Tlatelolco neighbourhood of Mexico City. It was - and still is - the location of the Colegio de Santa Cruz, the first and oldest European school of higher learning in the Americas. A large housing complex - the 12-storey Chihuahua Building - had only been built by the square four years earlier. The Secretariat of Foreign Affairs was also located there, to the plaza's south.

The meeting started later than its scheduled 5pm time but thousands of students had flooded into the square, many carrying placards and banners. Other groups - residents, children and passers-by - stopped to take in the event too, as

Right **Mexican Army soldiers, who battled protesting students all night and into the morning, find guard duty in Tlatelolco Plaza tiring**

OPEN
FROM 9.30 A.M. TO 7.00 P.M.
SUNDAY 9.30 A.M. TO 4.00 P.M.

BELOW Having searched the buildings around the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, a large number of students are captured



ABOVE Army assault troops take cover from rooftop fire in Tlatelolco Plaza as fighting continued on through the night

> “Díaz Ordaz was greeted with disdain and widespread boos when he made an appearance at the Olympic Stadium“

students took to a balcony about three floors up and began to deliver their speeches. On another balcony there were armed police, but at this stage the atmosphere was not especially menacing. Even so, there were two helicopters hovering overhead. One of them was being flown by the military and the other by the police.

At about 5.55pm, however, everything changed. The meeting was drawing to a close but a flare was set off from the Foreign Ministry building. The military also looked to arrest the organisers of the demonstration and so they made their way into the apartment building and onto the balcony, ordering everyone to lie face-down on the ground. Thousands of soldiers marched towards the plaza and around 200 tanks drove forward and surrounded the square. Gunshots were fired from the surrounding buildings and the troops started to shoot.

They appeared indiscriminate. Students, bystanders and children were in the firing line. Bullets were being sprayed from a machine gun and if they weren't striking people, they were ricocheting off buildings and the floor. People were trying frantically to get away amid the chaos, shouting and panic. Activists were falling to the ground and the air was being punctured by the sound of shattering glass and the piercing sirens of Red Cross ambulances. It was nothing short of a massacre. The Tlatelolco Massacre. A stain on Mexico's reputation.

How many died, no one is entirely sure. Mexico was secretive and remained so for some time - Mexican school books only began referencing the massacre in 1993. Officially, the dead were being counted in the dozens and the United States' National Security Archive suggested, in 2006, that 44 men and women were killed, 34 of whom have been named.

Trouble is, there has been a lack of evidence and conflicting reports for so many years. Indeed, when John Rodda wrote the only British newspaper first-hand account of the massacre, he reported 325 deaths, but some believe as many as 3,000 were killed. The truth may never emerge although we now know that the US government - which backed the PRI - played a part by giving the Mexican government weapons and ammunition to tackle the protests.

Disturbing stories have certainly been told of that night: of streets running with blood and bodies piled up on the floor; of the dead being hurled on to the back of trucks; and of prisoners being taken to military camps.

The elite Presidential Guard - otherwise known that summer as the Olympia Battalion because of their specific role in protecting the Games - had spent hours searching for students in the apartments surrounding the square. More than 1,000 students were said to have been arrested, kept overnight, stripped and beaten. Leaders were taken to Lecumberri Prison and ended up on hunger strike for six weeks due to their treatment. Student leader Salvador Ruiz was imprisoned for two years.

But why did the troops open fire? It's a question that has been explored over many years given the lack of a definitive account. There have been investigations and historians have looked to piece the events together based on the release of official documents. What has emerged are strong clues about what happened that night.

ABOVE A monument in memory of those who were killed in the Tlatelolco Massacre on 2 October 1968 was erected on the 25th anniversary

For years, the government and the army claimed that the students had instigated the violence. The students, in return, said the army had fired the first shots. Evidence has since emerged – including personal papers of the secretary of defence General Marcelino Garcia Barragan and military documents – which actually suggests the Presidential Guard was to blame.

Stationed on the roof of the apartments and inside flats, they are said to have shot not only at students, but at the soldiers – pointing to the massacre having been organised by the government of the day. By shooting at the soldiers, who were under orders not to shoot first, the Olympia Battalion would have provoked the resulting violence. Some documents point to the president himself issuing the order for snipers to shoot and there's evidence Olympia Battalion men wore worn white gloves to protect themselves from accidental soldier fire.

Even so, despite the massacre, the Olympic Games still went ahead. According to Rodda's subsequent report in *The Guardian*, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) "brushed aside" the "battle of the Square of the Three Cultures" – a sentiment born out in the statement issued by the then IOC president Avery Brundage.

"None of the demonstrations or violence has at any time been directed against the Olympic Games," he wrote, paving the way for the sporting spectacle to be staged. "We have been assured (by the Mexican authorities) that nothing will interfere with the peaceful entrance of the Olympic flame into the stadium on October 12, nor with the competitions which follow.

"As guests of Mexico, we have full confidence that the Mexican people, universally known for their sportsmanship and great hospitality will join participants and spectators in celebrating the Games, a veritable oasis in a troubled world."

As it happened, there was little trouble during the Games themselves, although Díaz Ordaz was greeted with disdain and widespread boos when he made an appearance at the Olympic Stadium. Ironically, the government festooned Mexico City with colourful banners and copious images of the white dove of peace. The slogan was also "Everything is Possible in Peace", but it was hard to forget the events just a couple of weeks earlier.

Internationally, the United States went on to achieve 45 gold medals, 28 silver and 34 bronze at the Games, topping the table ahead of the Soviet Union. East and West Germany competed separately for the first time, and the events were all broadcast in colour, along with the closing ceremony, also for the very first time.

But the Games of 1968 will always be associated with the violent repression of the student protests. It has also jarred that a Mexican government body – the Executive Commission for Attention to Victims – only recognised the state was behind the massacre as recently as 2018. No one was ever jailed, not for the killings or the terrible treatment dished out to students. It remains in the memory of Mexicans to this day and likely will do so forever more.

BELOW **What Mexico wanted the world to see: happy scenes in the University City Olympic Stadium during the opening ceremony, just ten days after the massacre**

THE BLACK POWER SALUTE

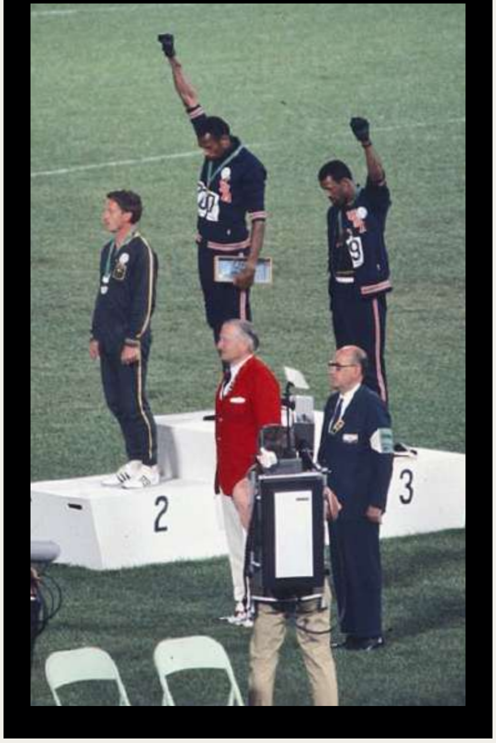
Mexican students were not the only ones trying to change the world for the better in 1968

African-American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos achieved great success in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. Smith, aged 24, achieved gold in the 200-metre sprint finals by officially breaking the 20-second barrier for the first time – his run coming in at 19.83 seconds. Carlos picked up a bronze in the same race with a time of 20.10 seconds.

When they were on the Olympic podium and the medals were placed around their necks, both track-and-field stars raised their gloved fists in a salute. It was symbolic of the Black Power movement and a protest against racism and injustice. But it was jeered by the crowd and saw the IOC disgracefully suspend the pair from the US team and ban them from the Olympic Village. Even so, it brought great attention to the social issues that blighted the United States.

The two athletes also wore black socks and no shoes, a symbol of Black poverty. Carlos wore beads around his neck as protest against lynching, while Smith donned a scarf to represent Black pride. Next to them was the silver medallist, Australian Peter Norman, who finished with a time of 20.06 seconds. He didn't raise his fist but he fully backed the protest and, having witnessed intolerance in his own country, he wore a badge for the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

Tommie Smith and John Carlos raise a fist: they shared a pair of gloves, which is why they raised different arms



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The Special Olympics

Discover how JFK's sister began a sporting movement that brought intellectual disability out of the shadows

Words Scott Reeves

The tragic fate of Eunice Kennedy's siblings is well known. Oldest brother Joe was the pilot of a plane that exploded in the air over Suffolk in 1944. Next, brother John was the 35th president of the United States until his infamous assassination in 1963. Younger brother Robert was a frontrunner for the Democratic nomination in the 1968 presidential election before he too was killed, while sister Kathleen died in a plane crash in 1948.

But you probably haven't heard of another Kennedy sister, Rosemary. She was, to use the terminology of the day, mentally retarded. The exact nature of her disability is unclear, since her father kept her veiled in a cloak of secrecy to 'protect' the family name, but we do know that in 1941, at the age of 23, a failed lobotomy left her unable to speak and with the mental capacity of a two-year-old.

The skeleton in the Kennedy family closet must have been a powerful driving force behind Eunice Kennedy Shriver's (she married Sargent Shriver in 1953) decision to set up a summer camp for children with intellectual disabilities at her Maryland Farm in 1962. Camp Shriver recruited 26 high school and college students to act as counsellors for 34 special-needs children put forward by special schools and clinics in the area. It was a great success. No longer excluded from summer camps, the children embraced gymnastics, ball sports, horse riding and swimming with gusto.

As the executive vice president of the Joseph P Kennedy Jr Foundation, a charity set up in memory of her brother killed in action during World War II, Eunice had already bestowed money to research intellectual disabilities. Now, the Kennedy Foundation began to fund new summer camps run on a similar basis to Camp Shriver. The following summer, more than 800 children with special needs attended a fun Foundation-backed camp.

Eunice was convinced that physical education led to a dramatic improvement in learning among the children she worked with. Next, she used the Foundation's funds to pilot projects establishing year-round Special Recreation Programmes in Boston, Chicago and Greensboro.

Progress in Chicago was initially slow. Eunice sent Sargent to meet with representatives in the city and discover how they had spent their $10,000 grant. The Chicago Park District responded with a proposed track-and-field event for intellectually disabled children in 1968.

Local PE teacher Anne McGlone Burke, the initiator of the idea, was despatched to

© Special Olympics

ABOVE Anne McGlone Burke was the local driving force behind the first World Games in Chicago

ABOVE **Martin Rodriguez and coach Linda Mondschein, left, pass the baton to Herman Thomas and coach Jim Smith, right, during the 400m relay race. Thomas and Rodriguez are both blind**

Washington, DC, to seek Eunice's endorsement and additional financial support. She thought the project was a wonderful idea, but encouraged Burke to think bigger. Why stop at Chicago? Why not open up the track meet to the entire country? A cheque for $25,000 gave Burke the resources she needed to make the event a far greater affair than she initially envisaged.

It was not an easy task. Some recoiled at the thought of celebrating children with intellectual difficulties when the norm was for them to be hidden away. One charity responded to a request for funding by telling Burke, "You should be ashamed of yourself putting these kinds of kids on display."

Yet despite such prejudiced opposition, Burke and the rest of the organising committee, with Eunice as honorary chair, did a sterling job of expanding the remit. On 20 July 1968, around 1,000 athletes from 26 states and Canada arrived at Soldier Field sports stadium in Chicago's Near South Side. Builders, carpenters and labourers had donated their time and skills to help prepare the stadium for the festivities.

Inspired by the 1968 Olympics, which were to be held in Mexico City that October, the Chicago event was named the International Special Olympics Games. The committee borrowed symbology from the established Olympics, too. Athletes took part in a parade to open the games, marching behind state flags. A teen runner carried a torch into the stadium and boarded a cherry picker platform to light the 40-metre-high John F Kennedy Flame of Hope. Eunice asked athletes to recite an oath inspired by the Olympic creed of not winning but taking part. The first Special Olympics athletes pledged, "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

The release of 2,000 balloons marked the beginning of competition. Child athletes took part in more than 200 events including 50-yard sprints, standing long jump, high jump and softball throwing.

At one end of the field was a 25-yard swimming pool, built to accommodate 25-yard and 100-yard races. Some experts suggested that swimming was too dangerous for children with intellectual disabilities, but the American Red Cross placated doubters by providing volunteer lifeguards. Not a single soul had to be pulled from the water. The pool also played host to a water polo tournament. Among those who jumped in the pool to throw the ball around was Eunice herself.

BELOW **Athletes on the podium won gold, silver and bronze, but all competitors were given a commemorative medal**

© Special Olympics

BELOW **The Games borrowed symbols from the Olympic movement, including a torch at the opening ceremony**

© Special Olympics

There were few spectators in the stands, and few athletes watched their fellow competitors either; they were too busy. Volunteer coaches offered clinics on the sidelines, and there were some notable names among them. Some lucky track athletes were tutored by an Olympic champion: Jesse Owens (four golds in 1936), Wilma Rudolph (three golds in 1964), Rafer Johnson (1964 decathlon winner) and Bob Mathias (1948 and 1952 decathlon winner). Players who took part in floor hockey (ice hockey without the ice) had Stan Mikita of the Chicago Blackhawks and George Armstrong of the Toronto Maple Leafs cheering from the sidelines. The honorary head of the coaching staff was astronaut Jim Lovell. Five months later he would orbit the Moon in Apollo 8.

The single day of competition flew by. The closing ceremony saw state flags lowered and carried out of the stadium. Every athlete who marched behind had a medal. Aside from gold, silver and bronze for the top three in each event, each competitor was gifted a special commemorative medal.

> **"Some lucky track athletes were tutored by an Olympic champion"**

The torch was extinguished, but Eunice pledged that it would ignite again, promising to hold the Special Olympics every two years. Within two weeks, Special Olympics was legally incorporated as a separate organisation from the Kennedy Foundation. The first directors included Eunice, Jim Lovell, Rafer Johnson and professors Robert Cooke, Frank Hayden and Lawrence Rarick.

The International Special Olympics Games were a watershed moment in the perception of

ABOVE **Kirk Liles gets a hug after he crosses the finish line**

BELOW **Eunice Kennedy Shriver first started exploring how sport could help children with intellectual difficulties at summer camps in 1962**

© Special Olympics

ABOVE **Shriver on a trip to Europe preparing children for the 1970 Special Olympics**

THE GROWTH OF THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS

A number of significant milestones were passed in three decades of Special Olympics

WORLD GAMES *1968*
The inaugural Special Olympics World Games are judged a great success

CROSSING THE POND *1970*
French athletes join those from the US and Canada at the second World Games

WINTER IS COMING *1977*
The first World Winter Games are held at Steamboat Springs, Colorado

LORETTA *1983*
Loretta Claiborne, gold medallist in six World Games, wins her first medal

OFFICIAL RECOGNITION *1988*
The IOC recognises and endorses the Special Olympics for the work it carries out; the World Games are judged a great success

people with intellectual disabilities. No longer were children hidden away through shame or embarrassment, as Rosemary Kennedy had been. Out of the shadows, the Special Olympics made it possible for children to compete and openly have fun with no risk of stigmatisation.

What followed next were decades of growth. The International Special Olympics Games returned to Soldier Field for a second time in 1970. This time the festival was a three-day affair. All 50 US states were represented, and the Canadians were not the only international contingent. A small delegation from France made the long journey across the Atlantic to make a total of 1,500 athletes.

BELOW **The only international element of the first World Games was a delegation of athletes from across the border in Canada**

CANADA
TORONTO CANADA

© Special Olympics

As the years progressed, the Special Olympics moved on to new venues. Age categories were widened in order to allow more people to compete. More countries sent delegations of athletes. Unified sports were introduced, allowing athletes with and without intellectual disabilities to take part in events as teammates. Winter sports like skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing and skating were included with the introduction of Winter Games. The Special Olympics moved abroad, with both Summer and Winter Games being hosted in European and Asian cities.

The Special Olympics World Games, as they later renamed, were the pinnacle of competition, but they were not solely about performing on an international stage. National, regional and local games were organised by Special Olympics programmes that formed throughout North America and the wider world. Today, more than 5 million athletes across 172 nations compete in more than 100,000 Special Olympic events each year. Only a few will ultimately have the opportunity to qualify for the World Games, but the Special Olympics are more about celebrating participation and less about championing winners.

The 15th edition of the World Summer Games in 2019 branched out to the Middle East, where 7,500 athletes from 190 countries congregated in Abu Dhabi. Medals were awarded in 24 different sports. Just like in 1968, athletics and swimming were the core of the schedule, but now they were joined by a host of other events from cycling and gymnastics to volleyball and roller skating. Singers Avril Lavigne and Nicole Scherzinger headlined extravagant opening and closing ceremonies that featured a 600-square-metre giant screen and an LED floor.

It was a long way from the flag parades and polite applause that marked the beginning of the 1968 Special Olympics at Soldier Field. The growth of the Special Olympics dragged intellectual disability out of the shadows, giving previously hidden children and adults the chance to experience the joy of sporting competition.

BELOW **Special Olympian Amy Falk, 15, and her personal care attendant Marcy Scheele at the awards ceremony in Minnesota**

© Special Olympics

ABOVE **The spectacular opening ceremony at Abu Dhabi in 2019 illustrates just how far the Special Olympics has come**

© Special Olympics, Getty Images

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WELT-WINTERSPIELE
1993

LEAVING HOME *1993*
The Austrian towns of Salzburg and Schladming host the first World Games outside the US

IRISH CRAIC *2003*
Dublin plays host to the first Summer World Games outside the US

RIP EKS *2009*
Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder of Special Olympics, dies

GREEK ODYSSEY *2011*
The Panatheanic Stadium, venue of the 1896 and 2004 Olympics, hosts events at the World Summer Games in Athens

UNIFIED CUP *2018*
An international unified football tournament is held in Chicago to mark 50 years of Special Olympics

Murder in Munich

In the summer of 1972, West Germany opened its doors to the world as host of the greatest show on Earth. Within days, a global audience would be gripped by a very different spectacle as terror descended on the Olympic Village

Words Charles Ginger

Shmuel Lalkin was worried. The Olympic officials who had guided him to the Israeli team's apartments had seemed more interested in maintaining the spirit of the Games of 'peace and joy' than discussing security, but Shmuel couldn't shake his feeling of unease upon seeing the team's home for the next few weeks: ground-floor apartments in a small block on the edge of the village, a two-metre fence punctuated by a gate just outside. They'd be isolated and exposed. He informed the Games' organisers of his concerns, but something told him that their assurances of "taking every possible measure" to ensure athletes were kept safe had fallen like seeds on stony ground. He would soon be proven tragically right.

The 1972 Olympic Games presented West Germany with an opportunity to cast off the shackles of a bloody past and exorcise the ghosts that had haunted it since the 1936 Berlin Games. Hosted three years prior to the outbreak of World War II, Hitler had used the event as an opportunity to promote his twisted ideology, the Nazis' belief in supposed Aryan supremacy promoted even as the likes of Jesse Owens annihilated their flawed logic. Now, 36 years later, West Germany, divided in the aftermath of the war, had a chance to show the world that it was a caring, inclusive and, above all, peaceful nation.

Considering the legacy that this fledgling country was trying to escape, the desire to avoid displaying even a hint of militaristic capability was understandable. It was also fantastically naive. Titling the event as 'the Games of Peace and Joy' was one thing – failing to abide by even the most basic security measures quite another.

Trained to deal with ticket frauds and drunken fans, the security teams that were installed in and around the Olympic Village and stadiums were not remotely prepared for any situation that didn't entail showing an unwelcome spectator the door. The authorities' lack of dedicated security personnel was made all the more damning given the warnings of a psychologist they hired to come up with a range of potential terrorist situations in order to help with preparations. Police psychologist Georg Sieber created 26 scenarios: 'situation 21' accurately predicted what would in fact unfold in the early hours of 5 September, but to defend against such an event would have required the presence of heavily armed guards – an image contrary to the idea of 'peace and joy'. The authorities therefore decided to do nothing.

Founded in the wake of the Jordanian Civil War (6 September 1970 – 17 July 1971), the Black September Organisation was a violent splinter of the larger Palestinian Liberation Organisation (itself established in May 1964, and later led by Yasser Arafat – the future Palestinian president – from 1969 until his death in 2004) dedicated to the destruction of the state of Israel, as well as committing reprisal attacks on prominent Jordanians after thousands of Palestinian fighters were ousted from the country during the civil war. In 1971, the group claimed its first victim when four assassins gunned down Jordan's prime minister, Wasfi Tal, in the lobby of a Cairo hotel during an Arab League summit. They followed this killing up in May 1972 by hijacking a Belgian passenger plane bound for Lod in central Israel.

> "The group began plotting an outrage that would shock the world"

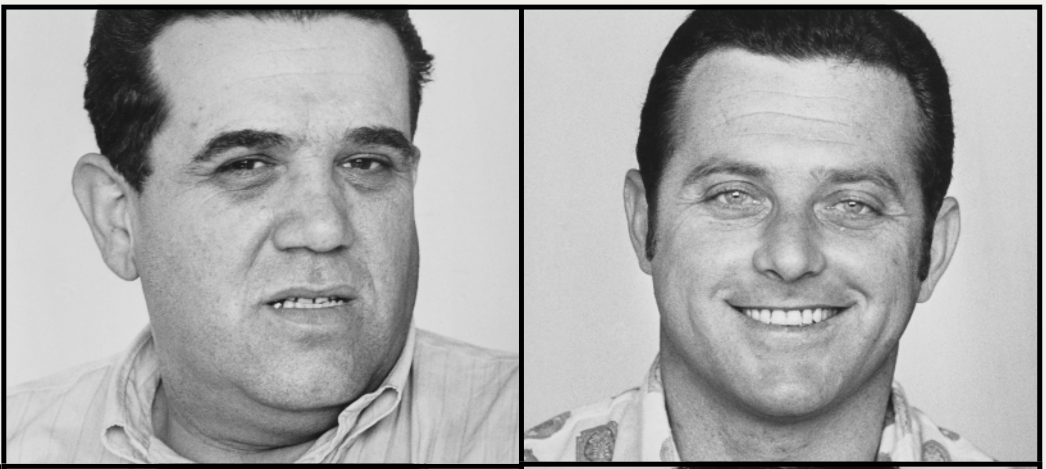
Emboldened, the group decided to aim their sights higher, and the prospect of attacking the hated Israelis on a global stage was too good an opportunity to miss. Obtaining a detailed plan of the layout of the Olympic Village, the group began plotting an outrage that would shock the world.

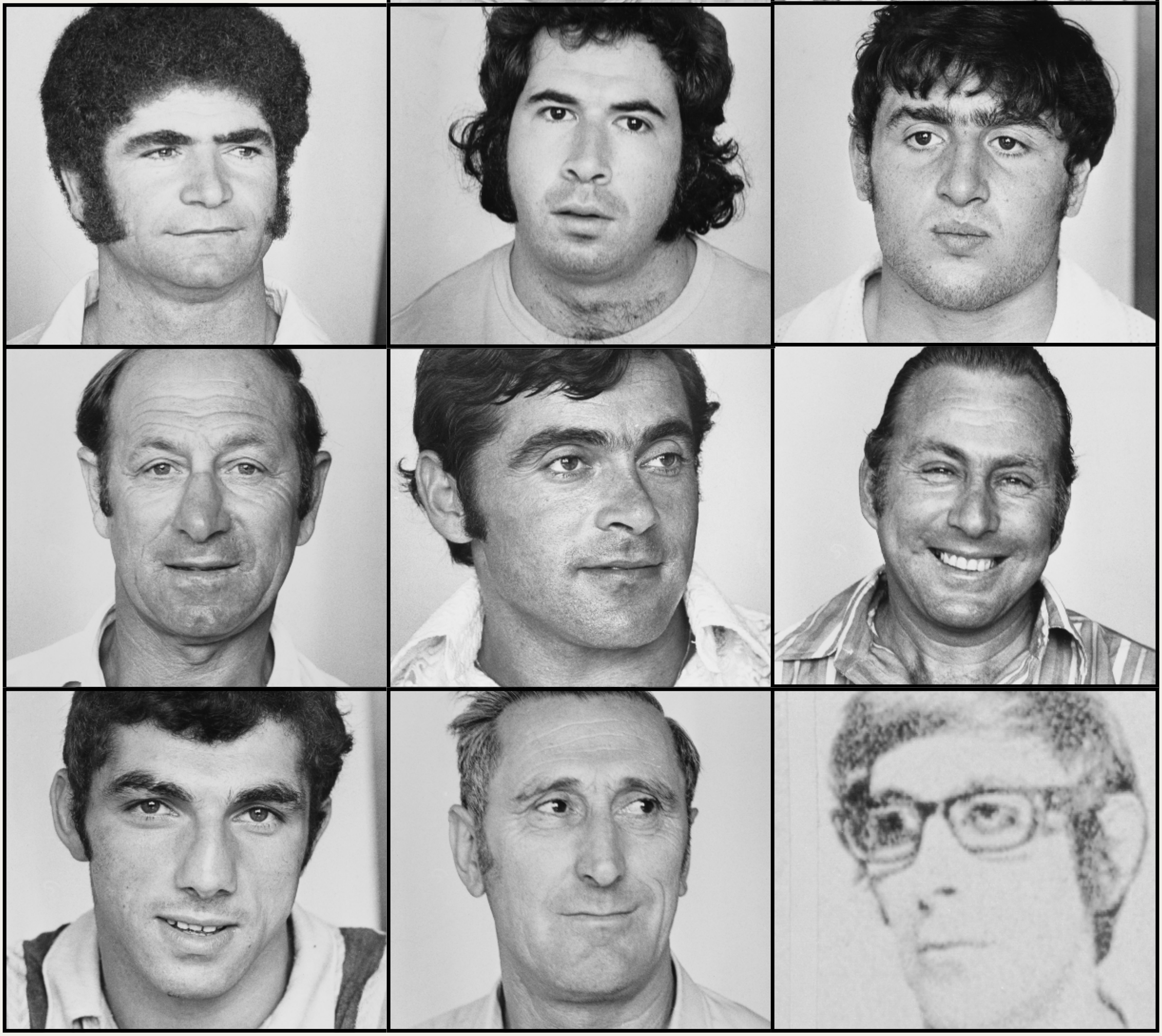
Black September's despicable assault began at 4.30am on the morning of 5 September when eight members of the group (clad in tracksuits so as to blend in with the athletes inside the Village) climbed the fence beside the Israeli team's apartments with the aid of some unsuspecting Canadian athletes, who were sneaking into the compound at the same time.

Sporting duffel bags loaded with assault rifles, pistols and grenades, the terrorists immediately made for the ground-floor apartments in which their targets slept. Armed with stolen keys, they began to open the door. On the other side stood Yossef Gutfreund, an Israeli wrestling judge. Having heard a strange noise outside, Gutfreund had gone to investigate, only to be confronted by the sight of armed men in balaclavas forcing their way inside. Bellowing a warning to his countrymen, he courageously slammed his body against the door with enough force to bend the hinges, and managed to hold the attackers back long enough for Tuvia Sokolovsky, a weightlifting coach, to smash a window and climb to safety. Dr Shaul Ladany, a race-walker sleeping in apartment 2, was awoken by Gutfreund's cries and also managed to flee. Seconds later, the eight gunmen pushed their way into the building.

Despite being faced with heavily armed opponents, Moshe Weinberg, the 32-year-old coach of the Israeli wrestling team, snatched up a knife and launched himself at Luttif Afif (the group's leader, whose face was daubed in black paint, and the son of a Jewish mother). His strike didn't draw blood, instead cutting through Afif's breast pocket.

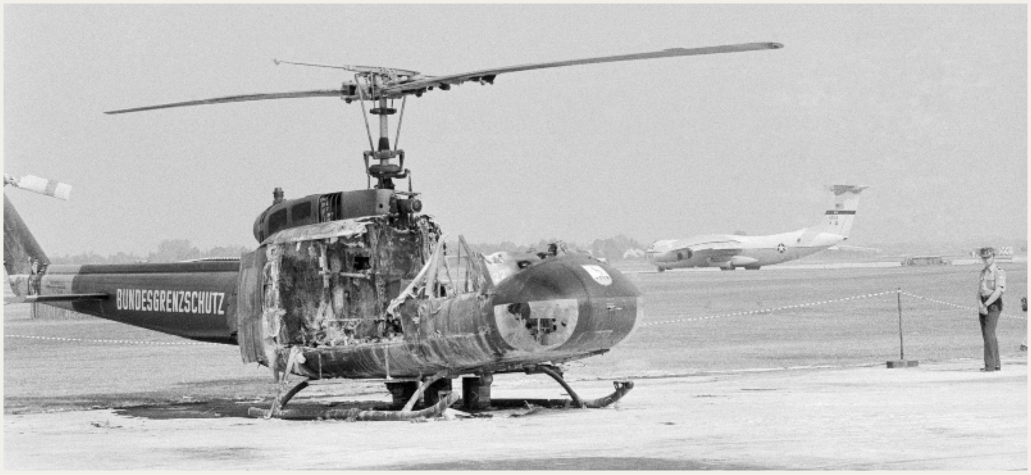
BELOW **(from top left to right) Yosef Gutfreund, 40; Moshe Weinberg, 33: (second row left to right) Yossef Romano, 32; David Berger, 28; Mark Slavin, 18; (third row left to right) Yakov Springer, 52; Ze'ev Friedman, 28; Amitzur Shapira, 40: (bottom left to right) Eliezer Halfin, 24; Kehat Shorr, 53; Andre Spitzer, 27**





BELOW A terrorist ventures out onto the balcony, his face masked by a balaclava

ABOVE Sporting a white hat and black face paint, Luttif Afif, leader of the Palestinian terrorists, negotiates with West German authorities



ABOVE A West German police officer stands watch next to the wreckage of one of the helicopters used to fly the hostages and their captors to the air base. It was later destroyed by a grenade, killing the captives inside

Desperate to stop Weinburg's selfless assault, one of the terrorists shot him in the cheek. Bleeding and in agony, Weinburg was forced at gunpoint to locate other hostages.

Some accounts claim that Weinberg deliberately led the gunmen past apartment 2 - lying that the men inside were not Israeli - to apartment 3 in the hope that the wrestlers and weightlifters inside would have a better chance of resisting. However, other sources state that the Palestinians, furnished with a floorplan of the building, skirted the second room because it housed members of the Israeli shooting team, adversaries that, had they been armed and awake, could have changed the outcome of the attack. Whether Weinberg had the presence of mind to deceive his assailants or not, the result was the gathering of 11 Israeli hostages, who were all marched back to apartment 1.

Determined not to be led meekly to his demise, Weinberg attacked Mohammed Safady as the group moved towards the first apartment, knocking him unconscious and nearly grabbing his gun. This time he received a fatal gunshot for his efforts, but in hitting Safady he had caused enough confusion to allow Gad Tsobari, a wrestler on Weinberg's team, to escape into an underground garage. Another hostage, Yossef Romano, also threw himself at the gunmen, despite being on crutches. He too was shot dead before his body was castrated. Gathering the remaining nine hostages, the terrorists prepared themselves to face a rescue attempt. Tragically for their innocent captives, it would never come.

Alerted to the disaster unfolding in the Olympic Village, the German security services surrounded the Israeli team's apartments and started planning how best to rescue the hostages inside. Unfortunately, they would only succeed in adding to a burgeoning litany of errors. First among them was their remarkable inability to appreciate that not only was the world's media gathering around them to film the attack, but that the terrorists inside were also watching, meaning that any move the German police made would be beamed on TV inside the apartments.

Refusing help from Mossad (the Israeli intelligence agency, which unlike its West German counterpart, had an anti-terrorism department) and unable to accept it from the German military by law, the German police pulled back from their rescue efforts and began negotiating with the gunmen through Afif. Black September's demands were simple: the group called for the release of over 200 Palestinians held in Israeli custody, as well as the release of Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof (members of the Red Army Faction, a left-wing militant group), and a plane to be supplied that would transport them to the Middle East.

Finally, at around 10pm, after hours of discussions between Afif and German negotiators, the terrorists agreed a deal. They and their hostages would be driven in two buses to a pair of helicopters that would then fly them to Fürstenfeldbruck Air Base (25 kilometres west of the Olympic Village). Awaiting them would be a plane ready to fly them to the Middle East.

The gunmen piled their restrained and blindfolded hostages onto the buses. Minutes later, they all disembarked to board the awaiting helicopters, which landed at the air base at around 10.30pm. Unbeknown to the Palestinians, they had been dropped into a trap. Sadly for their hostages, it would spring shut on them as well.

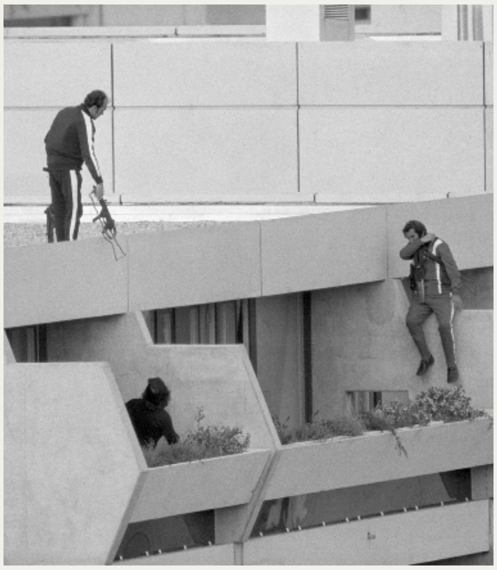
In a collection of unfathomably short-sighted mistakes, the police officers tasked with capturing - or if necessary, killing - the terrorists were not trained marksmen. Moreover, they had been furnished with assault rifles instead of sniper rifles, didn't have long-range scopes or night-vision, and lacked radios. On top of this, the officers on board the plane who were disguised as aircrew inexplicably decided to abandon the aircraft without informing their superiors. When two of the terrorists stepped out of the helicopters and inspected the now-empty plane, their suspicions were aroused. As they raced back towards the helicopters, screaming warnings to their comrades, the armoured cars dispatched to rescue the hostages sat idle in a traffic jam.

> "The Games largely carried on, only suspended for 24 hours"

Startled into action, the German police opened fire. The terrorists returned it, initiating a vicious fight that saw bullets zipping across the tarmac. Helpless, the hostages could only crouch inside the helicopters and pray. Instead of salvation, they were answered with a massacre when a terrorist threw a hand grenade into one of the helicopters while another riddled the second chopper with machine-gun fire. While the battle was raging on the airstrip, Jim McKay, a sports anchor for ABC in the US, kept audiences around the world updated on the night's devastating events.

Screeching onto the tarmac, the armoured cars finally made an appearance, only to shoot at their own side when a German sniper downed an onrushing terrorist and thereby drew the attention of the vehicles, whose occupants fired on them before realising their error.

BELOW Armed with machine guns, West German police clamber down the side of the apartment block. Ultimately the planned rescue mission would be aborted



It wasn't until 12.30am on 6 September that the guns eventually fell silent. Hopeful, hurried reports of the hostages being freed were replaced by the brutal reality when a visibly saddened McKay informed viewers, "They're all gone." 20 hours of hell for the innocent Israeli hostages had ended in a hail of bullets and blood, with all 11 dead, along with five of the terrorists and a German policeman. Three of the gunmen had been captured alive.

To this day, the Olympics have continued to fail to properly remember the athletes who lost their lives. Nowhere does an official Olympic memorial stand to commemorate their suffering. Amazingly, while the hostages were held at gunpoint fearing for their lives, the 1972 Games largely carried on, only suspended for 24 hours after they had all been killed. The president of the International Olympic Committee at the time, Avery Brundage, added insult to considerable injury by comparing the atrocity to the IOC banning Rhodesia from the Games in a clumsy speech on the 6 September that confirmed the Games would carry on.

Yet while Brundage completely failed to appreciate the gravity of the situation, the wider world did not. Today, a memorial stands in Munich Park to commemorate the 11 victims of an outrage that appalled the world. But perhaps a more fitting tribute is the continued spirit of unity, inclusion and collective strength that courses through the Olympics, a cause that brings the world together as one every four years. Surely that is the best way to remember the lives of 11 men who fought back in the face of certain death and went to their graves as one, having done all they possibly could to save their brothers. No act of terror could ever hope to break that bond.

ABOVE Shmuel Lalkin, head of the Israeli Olympic delegation and the man who first identified the risks of an attack on his team, speaks at a memorial service held during the wake of the massacre

WRATH OF GOD

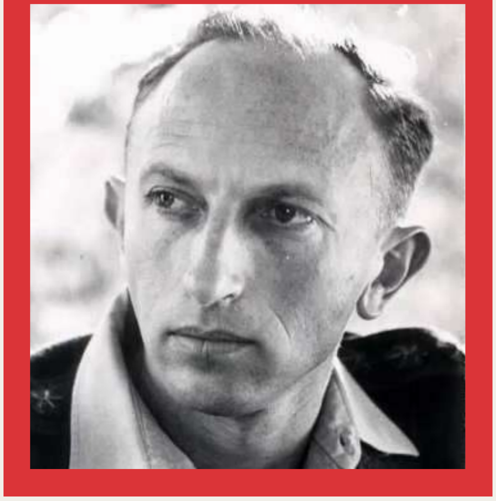
Vowing to avenge their fallen countrymen, the Israeli secret service unleashed hell on Black September and their allies

According to the proverb, all is fair in love and war, and hunting down the men behind the Munich Massacre seemed both entirely fair and absolutely necessary to the leaders of Israel's military and secret service, who concocted Operation Wrath of God in the aftermath of the events in Munich. Aimed at damaging the infrastructure of both Black September and the PLO, as well as achieving revenge, Committee X (as the covert group formed by Israeli PM Golda Meir was known) included army generals, counter-terror experts and Zvi Zamir, head of Mossad. Together the group created a list of targets and then set about assassinating them.

With their victims agreed upon, agents were dispatched to execute the Committee's bloody commands. A spate of shootings and bombings were duly carried out in Italy, France, Greece, Lebanon and Cyprus as various members of the Palestinian terror organisations were eliminated. The biggest scalp came in January 1979 when Mossad agents detonated a car bomb in a street in Beirut as a convoy transporting Ali Hassan Salameh (Black September's chief of operations and a man known to Mossad as the Red Prince) was passing. Sadly, not only did it kill Salameh and his bodyguards, but the blast also claimed the lives of four innocent passersby.

They were not the only innocent lives to be ended by Israel's violent response to Munich, proving that the most famous proverb about conflict is in fact untrue. In love and war, there is nothing fair about the death of innocents.

Zvi Zamir, pictured here in 1960 at 35, was a key player in the execution of the operation waged against Black September



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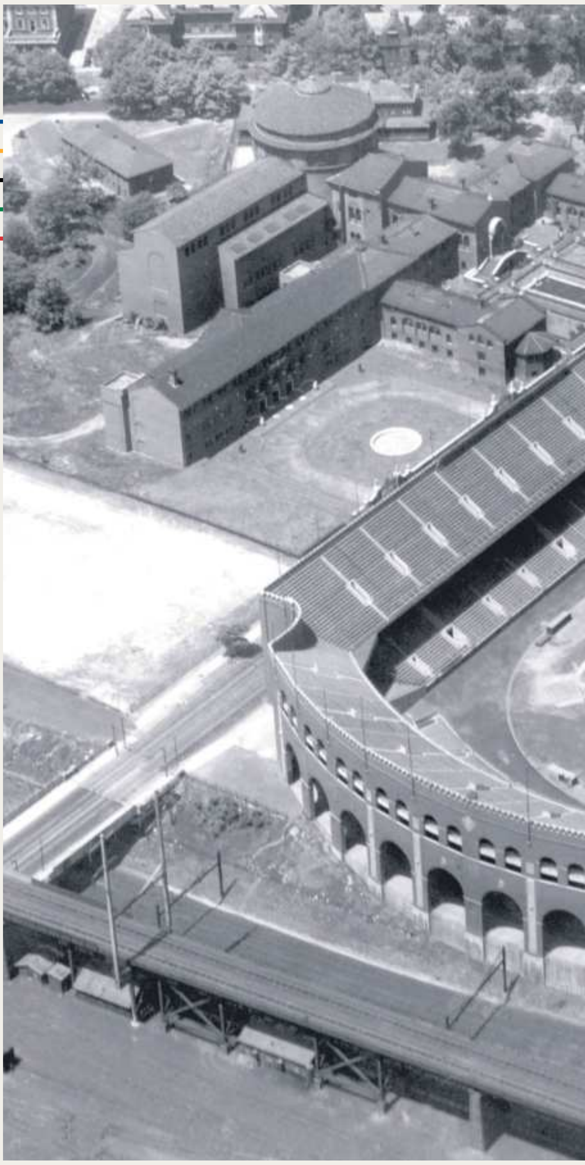
Liberty Bell Classic

In 1980, as the actual Olympics took place in Moscow, the US held a hastily organised alternative… in Philadelphia

Words Callum McKelvie



On Christmas Eve 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The response to the event was turbulent, causing historian Richard S Newell to comment in 1981 that the invasion had "ushered in a new era of confrontation and uncertainty in international relations". As part of his country's response to the invasion, US president Jimmy Carter led a global call to boycott the 1980 Olympics, set to be held in Moscow that summer.

> "US President Jimmy Carter led a global call to boycott the 1980 Olympics"

In order to make a boycott effective, the US began an intense lobbying campaign seeking to convince as many nations as possible to back out of the games. In early 1980, the government even sent Muhammed Ali on a diplomatic tour of Africa to try and persuade its leaders. While it was initially suggested that athletes from boycotting countries (which included Canada and West Germany) could compete under a neutral banner, Carter stated that the passport of any American athlete who attempted to attend would be voided. As a result, 25 competitors sought to sue the US government, seeking permission to take part, but ultimately lost the case.

Yet a problem now faced the Carter administration: what to do with all the athletes who had spent months in training? The solution? Make your own Olympics! Congress was able to appropriate $10 million for summer competitions, a portion of which was dedicated to a track and field event. With just over a month to prepare, Philadelphia's Franklin Field was chosen as the venue, in part due to pressure from Carter himself. After all, where better to hold a symbolic stand against the USSR than the birthplace of the Constitution? The event was named 'The Liberty Bell Classic' after the location's iconic symbol of American independence.

The resulting international meet took place on 16 and 17 July, in two days of weather that varied from blazing heat to thunderstorms. Athletes from 29 countries took part in a variety

RIGHT **President Jimmy Carter informs a group of athletes and officials that the United States will not be attending the 1980 Moscow Olympics**

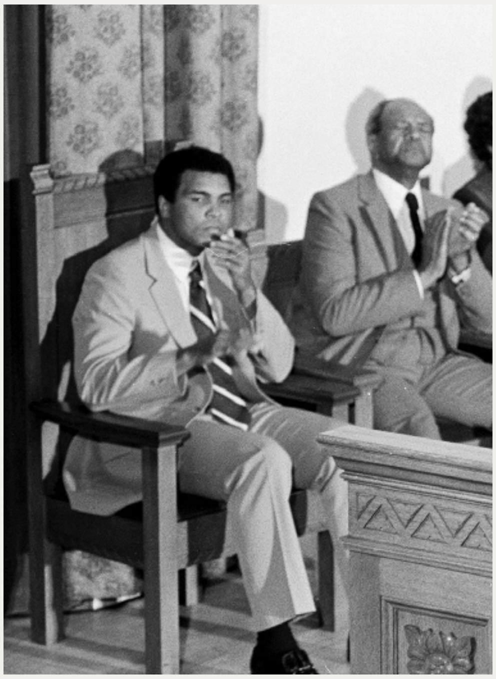
LEFT **Franklin Field in Philadelphia where the 1980 Liberty Classic took place**

ATHLETICS WEST
OLYMPIC
8
ENE, ORE

ABOVE **Mary Decker, who broke the record for the Women's 1,500-metre race at the Liberty Bell Classic**

of track and field events, from pole vaulting to relay races. However, the reactions from these athletes, many of whom were disappointed to be in Philadelphia and not Moscow, can be described as mixed at best. Steve Scott of the US questioned the description of the event as an 'alternative' to the Olympics, stating: "This wasn't even a good international meet." Guido Kratschmer, the West German holder of the world record holder for the decathlon, fouled all of his discus attempts. Perhaps most frustrating for the Carter administration was the fact that 17 of the US's 34 Olympic trial winners chose not to enter, or withdrew shortly before.

However, despite the somewhat lackluster response of some of the athletes, others threw themselves into the games. Out of the 25 events that took place on the final evening, American athletes were victorious in 18. Yet the highlight was inarguably the women's 1,500-metre race when Mary Decker broke her fourth US record in six days. Frank Litsky, writing on the closure of the event in *The New York Times*, stated: "The Liberty Bell Classic ended tonight with smashing victories by Mary Decker, Steve Scott and Dong Paige, and a general feeling that when all was said and done this was a fine track and field event." Decker even commented: "Perhaps we should have one like this in the US every year."



LEFT **Muhammed Ali was recruited by the Carter administration to lobby African leaders to boycott the 1980 Olympics**

© Getty Images, Alamy

Atlanta 1996

The Olympic Games that turned a profit

Words Edoardo Albert

Moscow. Los Angeles. Seoul. Barcelona. Atlanta.

Atlanta? Where's that? Moscow, Los Angeles, Seoul and Barcelona are all major cities, two of them capitals. You would not find many people who did not know that Moscow is in Russia or Seoul is the capital of South Korea. Barcelona, while not the capital city of Spain, is the centre of Catalonia, and as for Los Angeles, the home of Hollywood is probably better known than all but a handful of cities in the world. But Atlanta? Atlanta, Georgia?

When it was announced as the winner, many among the waiting journalists had to check where it was before filing their copy. A second-string city in an out-of-the-way American state and, what was more, an American state that had been one of the driving forces of the Confederacy during the American Civil War. Atlanta was where Martin Luther King Jr was born; his struggle for civil rights, much of it played out in his home state, suggested a city divided on long-ingrained racial

grounds rather than the sort of multicultural centre the Olympic movement sought to promote.

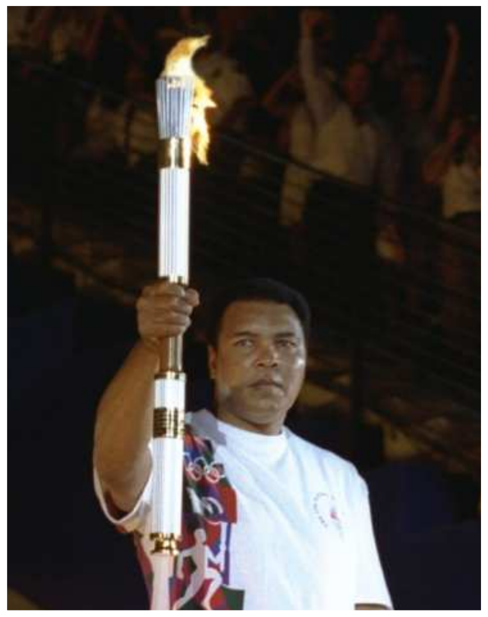
This was one of the reasons why the people of Atlanta and the rest of Georgia were so keen on bringing the Olympics to their city, for as far as they were concerned, the city had changed. The South had changed, and the people of Atlanta wanted the rest of the world to see that.

One of those keenest to bring the new South before the world was Billy Payne, an Atlanta lawyer and businessman. He conceived the idea of hosting the Games in his native city, and in the late 1980s set about drumming up support for the idea among local residents and businesses. Payne enlisted the support of Andrew Young, the black mayor of Atlanta, as well as many local businesses. But rather than asking the taxpayers of the city to pay for the Olympics bid, Payne raised the money from personal and corporate donors. Indeed, so invested were the local people in the idea that companies in Atlanta added a small donation to help pay for the bid onto their bills. Customers could opt into paying this if they chose and almost everybody did, thereby helping to raise the $7.3 million that it took to bid for the Games. This was notably less than other cities.

With Athens bidding to host the 1996 Games, exactly 100 years after the first modern Olympics in Greece, most observers expected the Centennial Games to return to their birthplace. Indeed, the chairman of the Athens team, Spyros Metaxa, asserted that Athens should host the Games as its "historical right due to its history". Such language did not go down well with the International Olympic Committee, and during five rounds of voting, Atlanta gathered votes from the other bidding cities to eventually overhaul Athens and be awarded the Games.

When the news was announced, the people of Atlanta started honking the horns of their

BELOW **Muhammad Ali lit the Olympic cauldron at the 1996 Games**



BELOW **The opening ceremony for the centennial Olympic Games**

SCAPEGOAT HERO

Security guard Richard Jewell foiled a terrorist attack, only to be crucified by the media

On 27 July, day eight of the Games, Richard Jewell, who had been hired as a security guard, spotted a suspicious package under a bench in a crowded area of the park, and immediately alerted the police. With other guards, Jewell started clearing the crowd, but the bomb exploded before everyone could be moved. One woman was killed and another man died of a heart attack, while 111 were wounded, but Jewell's actions had saved scores and he was hailed as a hero.

But three days later, the *Atlanta Journal*'s headline stated that the FBI was investigating Richard Jewell. Thus began a media feeding frenzy, stoked by unscrupulous leaks from the FBI. Reporters camped outside Jewell's house, and poked through every aspect of his past. News broadcasters suggested that Jewell, who lived with his mother, was a fantasist who longed to be a police officer and, wishing to be a hero, had planted the bomb himself so that he could find it and take the credit. Jewell was hounded, his home surrounded by reporters, and the FBI very publicly searched his house twice.

It was only on 26 October that Federal officials finally admitted that Jewell was not the bomber. Despite his exoneration, Jewell found that his life remained in many ways blighted. He was diagnosed with diabetes in 2007, and died from a heart attack on 29 August that year. He was 44.

Richard Jewell arriving at his home and being mobbed by the press

BELOW **Andre Agassi added Olympic gold to his Grand Slam of tennis majors**

cars while children in classrooms cheered and whooped. The Atlanta bid, rather than being driven by the vanity of government officials, had been genuinely rooted in local support, and this was reflected throughout the Games. However, being a grass-roots affair also meant that the Atlanta Games could not count on the public purse to pay. Indeed, this had been one of the features of the Atlanta bid that had swung it in the city's favour: too many previous Olympic host cities had been left debt scarred in the wake of the Games. By contrast, Atlanta was going to be privately financed.

The Games cost a comparatively frugal $1.7 billion, and were paid for through corporate sponsorship, and the sale of the television rights and ticket revenue. When all the numbers were totted up at the end of the Games, the city had actually made a small profit on the whole vast extravaganza – about $10 million. However, the corporate sponsors, who had coughed up $540 million to have their names associated with the Games, had exerted somewhat overbearing control over some aspects of the Games. For instance, Coca-Cola, an Atlanta-based company itself, paid to become the official soft-drinks provider for the Games, and no other brands were available in the Olympic venues and village. The Olympics had first sanctioned professional athletes in 1986, and ideals of amateurism were still widely held.

The rampant commercialism on display in Atlanta did provoke some dismay. However, the long-term legacy of the Games was excellent: the Olympic Stadium became home to the Atlanta Braves baseball team from 1997 to 2016, and now hosts the Georgia Panthers State University American football team. The Olympic Village became student housing, and the regeneration of downtown Atlanta was judged long and lasting.

The Games' legacy was in part a result of the success of the actual Games. The Centennial Olympics opened on Friday 19 July at the Centennial Stadium. Muhammad Ali, although suffering from Parkinson's disease, lit the Olympic cauldron, and the Games were officially opened by President Bill Clinton. With the local population hugely supportive of the Games, the stadium and other venues were packed throughout the three weeks, creating a vibrant atmosphere that helped spur the athletes to ever greater feats.

The Games were also helped hugely by taking place after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the bringing down of the Berlin Wall. Throughout the 1980s, Olympic Games had been disrupted by government-imposed boycotts protesting at the conduct of other governments. The end of the Cold War saw an end to boycotts, and 197 nations sent teams to the Games. 10,318 athletes took part: 6,806 men and 3,512 women. There were 271 events and 47,466 volunteers, with 15,108 media personnel present.

Three sports featured for the first time at the Atlanta Olympics: mountain biking, softball and beach volleyball. Softball would only survive as an Olympic sport for three more Olympiads, being dropped from the Games after Beijing 2008, but it is due to appear again at Tokyo 2020 in 2021 (yes, the year is wrong, but for marketing purposes the Games are retaining the '2020' title, despite having to delay a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Mountain biking and beach volleyball have remained Olympic sports since their Atlanta debuts. Bart Brentjens of the Netherlands and Paola Pezzo of Italy were the first gold medallists in mountain biking; the US team of Charles 'Karch'

> **“Three sports featured for the first time: mountain biking, softball and beach volleyball“**

BELOW **France's Marie-José Pérec matched Michael Johnson's achievement, winning gold in the 200- and 400-metre competitions**

Kiraly and Kent Steffes won the men's beach volleyball, while the Brazilian pair, Jackie Silva and Sandra Pires, won the women's competition; the American team won gold in the softball competition. Atlanta also saw new competitions for women's football, women's fencing, lightweight rowing and team rhythmic gymnastics.

As far as individual performances were concerned, there was no single dominant figure, but a number of athletes achieved great feats. Carl Lewis, the greatest athlete of the 1980s, finished his Olympic career by winning a final gold medal in the long jump, taking his overall tally of gold medals up to an astonishing nine. Lewis won the long jump gold in 1984, 1988 and 1992 before this final long-jump gold at Atlanta, as well as golds for the 100- and 200-metre sprints and the men's 4x100 metre relay. Michael Johnson of America won gold in both the 200- and 400-metre races, a feat matched in the women's events by France's Marie-José Pérec, who also completed the 200- and 400-metre double.

Outside the track and field stadium, on the tennis courts, Andre Agassi was the winner, adding Olympic gold to the Grand Slam of tennis majors he had already won, making him the first man to achieve a Golden Slam. Hong Kong won its only Olympic gold, with Lee Lai-Shan taking the winners' podium for the mistral boardsailing class (windsurfing). In the pool, Republic of Ireland's Michelle Smith won three golds and a bronze, becoming the country's most successful ever Olympian, her golds coming in the 400-metre freestyle, 200-metre individual medley and the 400-metre individual medley (the medley race is where the swimmer has to swim butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle). Smith's three gold medals in the pool were outdone by American Amy Van Dyken, who won four events. In gymnastics, Ukrainian Lilia Podkopayeva won the overall gold, and then gold in the floor-exercise, becoming the first gymnast since Nadia Comaneci to achieve this.

By the Games' closing ceremony on 4 August, the hosts, the US, were comfortably on top of the medal table, with 44 gold medals and 101 medals altogether. Russia was second with 26 gold medals, and Germany third with 20. Great Britain only achieved a single gold medal at Atlanta: Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent in rowing. It was something of a sporting nadir for Team GB, and led to the wholesale reappraisal of its approach to the Games that would bear increasing amounts of fruit from the Sydney Games onwards.

Seeing as over 10,000 athletes competed at the Games, but only 842 medals were awarded, the vast majority of competitors were failures, at least on the medal table. But for the city of Atlanta, and for most of the competitors who took part but did not win a medal, it was being part of something so extraordinary that really counted; the old cliché, first said by the founder of the Olympics, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, really did hold true: "The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning, but taking part."

BELOW **The 1996 Games were the first to feature mountain bike racing**

ABOVE **Ireland's greatest Olympian, Michelle Smith, on her way to gold in the 400-metre individual medley**

ABOVE **Michael Johnson won the 200-metre gold and broke the world record in the process**

© Alamy, Getty Images

Les arrivées
Arrivals

The 2000 Olympics held in Sydney, Australia, has been remembered for all the right reasons. Hailed as "one of the most successful events on the world stage", it was used as a benchmark for the success of London's 2012 Games. The United States topped the medal table with a total of 93, with Russia not far behind. The host nation came in fourth overall, while Great Britain came in tenth.

© Getty Images

China's First Olympics

The highs and lows of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

Words Scott Dutfield

On 8 August 2008, over 1 billion people tuned in to watch Beijing host the 24th Summer Olympic Games. Over the course of 16 days of painstaking competition, athletes from around the world convened in the Chinese metropolis to fight for the coveted 302 gold medals on offer, across 28 sports and inside 37 arenas.

Hosting the 2008 Olympics was a first for China, having made a successful bid back in 2001. Over the following seven years, Beijing got a modern makeover. To prepare for the inevitable spotlight placed on the city, China reportedly invested nearly $40 billion on its infrastructure, including transport renovations, new city-wide facilities and various upgrades.

As an institution, the Olympics has also preached to the word of unity and world peace, something China clearly had in mind when it announced its slogan for the 2008 games - 'One World, One Dream' - in 2004. However, this fell on the sceptical ears of the world's media, who had largely criticised the nation's human rights policies.

One of the biggest challenges for any host nation is constructing the Olympic-sized stadium to house the athletes and its spectators. For Beijing, China commissioned the construction of a 91,000-seat stadium. The Beijing National Stadium, nicknamed 'The Bird's Nest', took approximately three years to build, and came with a price tag of around £300 million.

As the name suggests, the architectural design for the stadium is reminiscent of an avian creation, albeit 69.2 metres tall. The stadium comprises 42,000 tons of criss-crossed steel beams, collectively spanning 26 kilometres, and was designed by German architectural firm Herzog and De Meuron Architekten. At the time of its construction, the stadium held the record of the world's largest steel structure.

Although its final unveiling was a moment of pride for Beijing, the road to its completion caused conflict with the city's residents. The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), a Geneva-based international non-governmental organisation, claimed that people were being evicted from their homes to accommodate redevelopment for the Olympics.

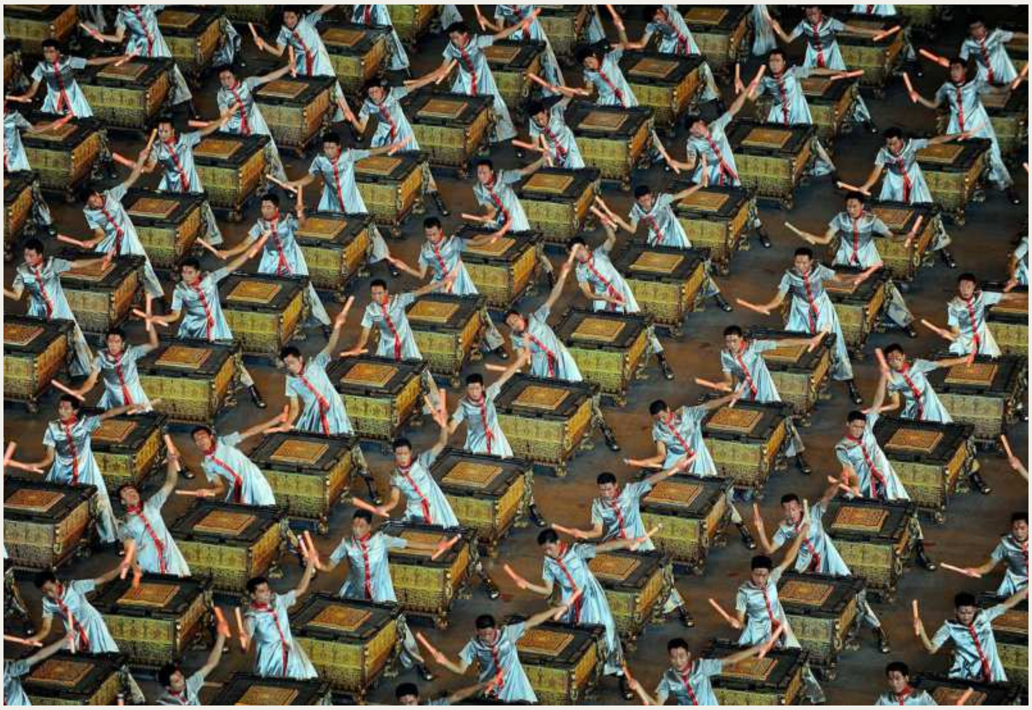
The group further purported that during the lead up to the games, some 1.5 million people were "forced to relocate" out of their homes. However, the Beijing Olympic organising committee and China's Foreign Ministry disputed COHRE's claims, and instead proclaimed that only 6,037 people had been displaced to make way for the construction of the stadiums.

Following on with the theme of unity, the Olympic torch relay, which leads the Olympic flame from Athens to the current Games, was called by organisers the 'Journey of Harmony'. The 129-day relay from Greece to Beijing saw the torch cross 137,000 kilometres via the hands of 21,800 torchbearers, which included travelling along part of the Great Wall of China. Once in Beijing, the torch headed towards China's newest national stadium to begin the 2008 Games.

Around 1.5 billion people sat in front of their television screens to witness the spectacle that was the Olympic opening ceremony. The ceremony started with the sound of 2,008 drummers, beating in perfect

BELOW The Beijing National Stadium, also known as The Bird's Nest

BELOW **Drummers performing during the opening ceremony**



> “Michael Phelps went down in history as the athlete to win the most gold medals in a single Olympic Games“

harmony, filling the stadium walls. What followed was four hours of patriotic presentation from 15,000 performers. The entire ceremony was produced by filmmaker Zhang Yimou, director of the movie *House of Flying Daggers*. The ceremony's budget was reported to have been more than $100 million.

However, several incidents of fakery were reported in the media following the ceremony's broadcast, including pre-recorded firework displays across the skies, from Tiananmen Square to The Bird's Nest. Audiences were also left uncertain about the live vocals of a nine-year-old singer, named Lin Miaoke, who sang 'Ode to the Motherland'. However, the ceremony's musical director, Chen Qigang, later told Beijing Radio that she was not singing, but lip-syncing to the vocals of another young girl called Yang Peiyi. Qigang suggested the reason for this was that Peiyi didn't meet the visual requirements to sing live at the ceremony.

The opening ceremony came to a close when former gymnast Li Ning was lifted to the stadium roof on strings, seemingly running to the Olympic cauldron before igniting it. In doing so, Ning signalled the start of fierce competition between the 204 competing nations.

Many milestones were achieved in Beijing, including a lot of firsts; Afghanistan won its first-ever medal when Rohullah Nikpai took home bronze in the men's 58kg taekwondo. Benjamin Boukpeti placed third in the men's single kayak slalom event – the first Olympic medal for Togo – and Tuvshinbayar Naidan won the first-ever gold medal for Mongolia for his victory in the men's 100-kilogram judo. There were also several new events added to the official 2008 Beijing programme, including the 3,000-metre steeplechase, men's and women's BMX, and women's foil and sabre events.

ABOVE **From left to right, silver medallist Nastia Liukin (USA), gold medalist He Kexin (China) and bronze medalist Yang Yilin (China) at the medal ceremony for the women's uneven bars**

The 2008 Olympics also saw some athletes smash worldwide records. Overall, 25 world records were broken during the Games. However, two competitors in particular dominated the headlines for their world-class achievements.

As the first man to ever win in three sprinting events at a single Olympics, Usain Bolt was very much the man of the hour on the racing track. The 2008 Olympics saw the hot-footed athlete breaking not one but three running records. Firstly, Bolt set the new record for the 100-metre sprint at 9.69 seconds, then smashed the record for the 200-metre race in 19.30 seconds. Finally, he broke the relay record with his fellow Jamaican teammates, completing four 100-metre sprints in just 37.10 seconds.

Taking home much more than a single gold medal, American swimmer Michael Phelps went down in history as the athlete to win the most gold medals in a single Olympic Games. The title had been previously held by fellow American swimmer Mark Spitz, who won seven gold medals back in 1972. However, Phelps snatched the title during the 2008 Olympics when the 23-year-old competed in 17 races over nine days, winning eight golds in the process.

The overall winner for the most wins during the Games was the United States, taking home 36 gold, 38 silver and 36 bronze medals. However, the host nation spirit must have inspired the Chinese athletes as they won the most gold medals of any country – 51 in total.

With great praise can come equal scrutiny, and the 2008 Olympics had its fair share of controversies. During the Games themselves, several scores and referee calls were challenged, although this is typical of any Olympic Games.

BELOW **Michael Phelps celebrates after winning his seventh gold medal**

STRIPPED OF GOLD

The many medals lost by athletes who should have know better

The 2008 Olympics will down in history as a record-breaking Games. However, it will also be remembered as the Games that saw the most athletes stripped of their medals.

Looking back on the 2008 Games, many will remember the best athletic prowess and performance the world has to offer. However, during the years that followed, a trend of revelations regarding athletes' use of performance-enhancing drugs has been brought to light. In total, 50 medals (9 gold, 21 silver and 20 bronze) have been stripped from the 2008 winners due to doping.

Unfortunately, because of the decisions of one of his compatriots, Usain Bolt lost his gold medal for the 4x100-metre men's relay. Bolt's teammate, Nesta Carter, was one of 454 selected samples from the 2008 Games that were retested by the International Olympic Committee back in 2016 for banned stimulants. Carter's sample tested positive for methylhexaneamine, which has been on the World Anti-Doping Agency prohibited list since 2004.

From left to right, Nesta Carter, Michael Frater, Usain Bolt and Asafa Powell, winners of the gold medal for the men's 4x100-metre relay

However, when Cuban taekwondo fighter Ángel Matos was disqualified from a match that could have won him the bronze medal, he did not take it well. Acting far from angelic, Matos lashed out and delivered a high kick to the referee's head. Matos was almost immediately issued a lifetime ban from all World Taekwondo Federation championships as a result.

One of the biggest sporting scandals to hit the newsstands, however, involved the hosts' female gymnastics team. What started as media rumours quickly turned into one of the biggest scandals of the 2008 Games. For qualification into the gymnastic events, athletes from all countries need to meet the minimum age requirement of 16. However, rumours stirred that one or more of the Chinese gymnasts might have been a few years from their sweet 16 birthday. *The New York Times* reported that three of the six members of the Chinese gymnastic team were potentially underage. While the Chinese government produced passports for all six athletes, confirming they were the right age and appeasing the Olympic Committee, many spectators around the world were left feeling sceptical.

Along with a sense of pride for a successful showcase of the world's finest athletes, China was left with the opportunity to advance education and energy consumption. From the get-go, the hosts presented the Olympics as an opportunity to address the growing problem of pollution within Beijing. At the time, the Chinese Technology Minister Wan Gang estimated that the Games would generate some 1.2 million tons of carbon dioxide, predominantly through air travel of competing athletes, so China introduced a tree-planting scheme and emission restriction in an attempt to offset the extra carbon dioxide.

It worked: a study by NASA found that through various motor vehicle restrictions during the Games, carbon dioxide emissions fell by between 26,500 and 106,000 tons. Using the momentum of environmental awareness the Olympic Games had generated, China went on to implement further policies to tackle its pollution problem. For example, 15,000 coal-burning boilers throughout the city of Beijing were replaced with cleaner energy sources. The city also increased the number of solar heaters by 17.6 per cent. The Games were a win for China and the environment.

ABOVE **Usain Bolt sets the world record at 9.69 seconds to win the 100-metre dash final**

ABOVE **Athletes pass a section of the Great Wall of China during the men's road cycling race**

© Alamy, Getty Images

London may have beat out Paris, Madrid, New York City and Moscow for the 2012 Olympics, but that didn't stop it from running into problems. From early security concerns following the 2011 England Riots to issues with venues, hurdles were overcome until the Games opened on 27 July 2012. The host nation finished the event in third place with 65 medals, behind China on 91 and the United States on 104.

© Getty Images

RUSSIA
London 2012
SAVINOVA
5
5

Russia's Doping Scandal

Why sports fans won't see the Russian flag flying in Tokyo, even though its athletes will be competing

Words David Crookes

If, as expected, Russian athletes win medals at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, their achievements will not be rewarded with the playing of their country's national anthem. Instead, the medal ceremonies will be serenaded by a small piece of Pyotr Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, because Russian athletes cannot compete at this year's Olympics under their country's flag.

There is a strong reason for this. In December 2014, the German broadcaster ARD aired a hard-hitting documentary called *The Secrets of Doping: How Russia Makes Its Winners*, which alleged that some Russian athletes had been systematically taking banned substances on the instructions of their coaches.

It led to resignations, including that of Valentin Balakhnichev, the then-president of the All-Russia Athletic Federation. He stepped down from his role as Treasurer of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) after the IAAF said it would look into claims of doping and allegations of a cover-up in Russia. An independent commission was set up by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) to investigate.

The following year, ARD broadcast a second documentary, *Doping Top Secret: The Shadowy World of Athletics*, based on a database of 12,359 blood tests taken from more than 5,000 athletes in 208 countries between 2001 and 2012. The database had been obtained in conjunction with the *Sunday Times* newspaper in the UK, and it uncovered more than 1,400 abnormal tests from more than 800 athletes in 94 countries.

LEFT **Mariya Savinova of Russia raced to victory in the 800-metre final at London 2012, but was stripped of her title and banned after being found guilty of doping**

Of those countries, Russia came out worst, with 30 per cent of blood tests claimed to be abnormal. Ukraine was second with 28 per cent; Turkey third with 27 per cent, and Greece fourth with 26 per cent. Morocco (24 per cent), Bulgaria (22), Bahrain (20), Belarus (19), Slovenia (16) and Romania (13) made up the rest of the top ten. But what was damning was that the analysis of the database showed more than 80 per cent of Russia medals in the Olympic games and world championship were won by suspicious athletes.

> ***"The International Olympic Committee acted to remove 111 Russian athletes"***

There was a resulting furore over the findings, as well as a number of questions about how the journalists had managed to get hold of such a large medical database. The IAAF was accused of failing to clamp down, but it strongly refuted the allegations, labelling them "sensationalist and confusing".

"ARD and *The Sunday Times* both admit that their evaluation of data did not prove doping," the IAAF said in a statement, adding that it wanted to stamp out doping in sport and had been at the forefront of drug testing.

That November, WADA released a report alleging "state-sponsored doping" in Russian track and field athletics. It called for the track and field team to be banned from international competition, and the IAAF quickly announced that it was suspending the Russian athletics team. The then-head of Russia's national anti-doping laboratory, Grigory Rodchenkov, was alleged by WADA to be "at the heart of the positive test cover-up", and he resigned the next day.

The following year, however, Rodchenkov surfaced in the pages of *The New York Times*, alleging high-level doping at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. He said he had created substances that would enable athletes in Russia to perform better, and that the intelligence service had figured out how urine containers could be opened and resealed, allowing samples to be switched. WADA investigated, and a report in July 2016 by Professor Richard McLaren said Russia should be banned from the Rio 2016 Olympics.

The International Olympic Committee acted to remove 111 Russian athletes, and banning the country's track and field participants, while clearing 278 to compete in Rio. By contrast, the International Paralympic Committee banned the entire Russian Paralympic team, which didn't go down well with the country's president, Vladimir Putin, who said the ban was "outside the bounds of law, morality and humanity".

In December that year, McLaren published a follow-up report commissioned by WADA. More than 1,000 Russian athletes across 30 sports were alleged to have benefitted from "an institutional conspiracy" of doping going back to 2011. It also said that salt, water and Nescafé coffee granules would be added to clean urine samples by Russian officials so they would match the gravity and appearance of dirty samples to trick testers.

It was damning, and Russia did what it could to limit the damage being inflicted. WADA was accused of being anti-Russian, and President Putin, while admitting the anti-doping system hadn't worked, insisted his country never had a state-sponsored doping program. "In Russia we never had, don't have, and I hope won't have, a state-sponsored doping program," he said on a visit to Siberia. "On the contrary, there will only be a fight against doping."

His words came as 18 Russian medallists were stripped of their Olympic titles. Ten others, who won their medals as part of relay teams where doping was deemed evident, were also told to return theirs.

Meanwhile, the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA) was being supervised by the British anti-doping agency, UKAD, and Moscow State University sent a letter to WADA informing that a new anti-doping laboratory was being set up. An arrest warrant was also issued for Rodchenkov, which demanded he be extradited from his new home in the United States on charges of an abuse of authority.

Despite such steps, denials continued. The World Cup was being held in Russia in 2018, and the draw took place at the end of 2017. Just before this, there was news that two Russian athletes who competed in London in 2012 had tested positive for drugs at the time, and that of 226 samples from Russian athletes, 21 were dirty.

Vitaly Mutko was Russia's sports minister when those Games were held, but now he was head of the Russian FA and deputy to President Putin. During a press conference heralding the World Cup draw, he initially said he didn't want to speculate about the forthcoming decision being made by the IOC over Russia's involvement in the 2018 Winter Olympics, but then angrily hit out.

"We believe in due process and the presumption of innocence," he told reporters. "Has any of this evidence been validated? What is this fashion for collective punishments? Let any individual caught cheating be published. Why do you trample Russia underfoot?"

The IOC suspended the Russian Olympic Committee from the Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea, that year, but rowed back and allowed 168 selected athletes to compete under the designation of 'Olympic Athletes from Russia'. Two of those athletes tested positive for banned substances, and were found guilty of doping by the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

BELOW **President Vladimir Putin says Russia has never engaged in state-sponsored doping of sport**

РОССИЯ
В МОЁМ
СЕРДЦЕ

ABOVE **In 2017, the documentary film *Icarus* filmed Grigory Rodchenkov testifying that urine tainted with steroids was taken from Russian athletes and swapped with clean samples**

STYLING IT OUT

How Russia's athletes will ensure the world knows where they're from

Russia's athletes must compete in neutral uniforms. Their clothes cannot contain the national coat of arms or any other national symbols, just as their flag and anthem is barred.

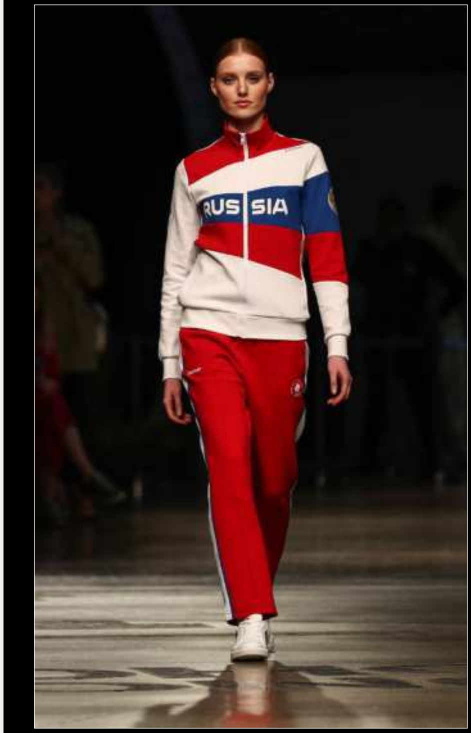
But the country nevertheless wanted to turn on the style in Tokyo, so it commissioned the sportswear manufacturer Zasport to design the uniform that athletes will wear. In doing so, it has taken the guidelines and worked with them to the limit they will allow.

As such, there may not be a Russian flag on the polo shirts and jackets, but the three colours of the national flag are very much evident. "We used the colours of the flag," said Russian Olympic Committee president Stanislav Pozdnyakov, hiding nothing during their unveiling.

Russia's flag has three stripes – white, blue and red, in that order – and the uniform follows the exact same pattern. 'Russia' is written large across the front of the shirts and the logo is that of the Russian Olympic Committee – the official team name of the athletes competing in Tokyo.

According to the International Olympic Committee, all of this means the uniforms do not breach the rules. "The uniforms have been approved on this basis," a spokesman told the Associated Press. At the 2018 Winter Olympics, no more than two colours from the Russian flag had been permitted.

A model wearing the uniform that will be worn by Russia's athletes in Tokyo



BELOW **Gold-winning bobsledder Alexandr Zubkov was stripped of his 2014 Winter Olympics medals after being found guilty of doping offences**

Mutko didn't oversee the World Cup in 2018. The three-year ban on RUSADA was also lifted in September of that year. But the ban on the Russian Athletics Federation continued and this stance by the IAAF – which is now known as World Athletics – was extended through 2019. Indeed, in December, WADA dealt a huge blow to Russian sport, which affects the Tokyo Olympic Games, because lab data released from RUSADA's laboratory in Moscow was discovered to have been tampered with.

> **"Putin insisted his country never had a state-sponsored doping programme"**

WADA handed Russia a four-year ban, leaving the country incensed. Although the ban was never going to affect Euro 2020 (another event put back a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic), it threatened to harm Russian involvement in the 2022 Beijing Winter Games, the 2024 Paris Olympics and the 2022 World Cup. The decision was supported by the IOC.

Russia vowed that it would appeal the ban, and forced a four-day arbitration hearing between WADA and RUSADA in November 2020, allowing judges from the Court of Administration to make a fresh decision. The four-year ban was halved the following month, and Russia's athletes were told that they would be allowed to compete at the Tokyo Olympics, as well as the 2022 World Cup, either as individuals or teams.

Like in PyeongChang, however, where the Russian team won 33 medals, 13 of them gold, the athletes have to compete under a neutral flag. They also have to wear kits bearing the words 'Russia' and 'Neutral Athlete'. It means the Russian flag will not fly in Tokyo and the national anthem will not be played. That will be the case for the 2022 Winter Olympics, too, but it has led to outrage that, in effect, Russia has merely been rebranded and not banned.

"Our Olympic team has all the elements of its identity," said Stanislav Pozdnyakov, president of Russia's Olympic Committee in April 2021. "We have the flag of the Russian Olympic Committee with the colours of our tricolour, our official equipment – easily recognisable for both our compatriots and fans from other countries – without any inscriptions. And now we have a musical accompaniment." Indeed, the team does. But when the concerto plays, it'll prove a constant reminder of just how Russia reached this point.

ABOVE **Russian athletes were cleared to compete in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, allowing these gymnasts to win their gold medals**

ABOVE **When Russia achieved gold at the Winter Olympics in PyeongChang in 2018, the Olympic flag was raised**

© Alamy, Getty Images

Tokyo 2020: The Covid Games

The events were held behind closed doors but the organisers of Tokyo 2020 ensured coronavirus didn't end up the ultimate winner

Words David Crookes

As the closing ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics wrapped up on 8 August 2021, you could almost hear the relief reverberating around Japan. The city had done it! The city had triumphed! The city had overcome all of the odds that had been stacked against it. In fact, the city had managed to get through each and every day – something that had increasingly seemed unimaginable just a few weeks before.

When historians look back over these most recent Games, there will always be one word that springs to mind: coronavirus, or to be exact, Covid-19. At the very least, the fact the 2020 Olympics were being held in 2021 will forever ensure the pandemic emerges as an explanation. But, more than that, Covid-19 will be used to explain why there were no foreign fans or tourists in attendance and, more starkly, why sporting events were played to a disheartening backdrop of empty seats.

It was certainly difficult not to feel sorry for Tokyo, a city that had naturally cheered when being awarded the games on 7 September 2013. It had decided to put in its bid just months after an earthquake caused a tsunami that flooded the reactors of the Fukushima nuclear plant – just 220 kilometres northeast of Tokyo in the town of Okuma. The country hoped the Games could lead to an economic revival and generate $2 billion for the city, yet the lead up to the Olympics could hardly be described as smooth.

As well as questions surrounding the bidding process in which Tokyo beat Istanbul by 60 votes to 36, having also seen off Madrid, there were issues related to the proposed Olympic Stadium. Rather than renovate Toyko's 48,000-capacity National Stadium, a decision was made to demolish the venue but, just two months after the ground was bulldozed in 2015, it emerged that the cost of building the new stadium would hit ¥250 billion – or an eye-watering $2.3 billion – and the situation forced organisers into a rethink following a public outcry.

This led to new architects being brought on board but instead of building an 80,000 capacity stadium as previously envisaged, the new design favoured 68,000. The revision also saw the retractable roof being scrapped and some permanent seating giving way to temporary seats. Air conditioning was also axed, even though July and August can be dangerously hot in Japan. As a result of the delays, the ground wasn't ready for the 2019 Rugby World Cup but, as it turned out, it was more than ready for the Olympics – even if they'd been held in 2020!

And that remained the intention for much of the first quarter of 2020: the organisers fully intended to host the Games between 24 July and 9 August that year and they hoped in their hearts that the pandemic would have fizzled away by then, or at the absolute least, the spread would be under control. Yet the only organisation which could cancel or postpone the event was the International Olympic Committee on the grounds that "the safety of participants in the Games would be seriously threatened or jeopardised for any reason whatsoever". The decision came on 24 March.

RIGHT **The Torch Relay finally got underway on 25 March 2021 in Fukushima. Here, the following day, former Olympic volleyball player Motoko Obayashi lights the celebration cauldron in the prefecture**

TOKYO 2020

In postponing, the IOC was clear. The Games were being rescheduled to a date beyond 2020 but not later than Summer 2021. But even as the next year rolled around and it became apparent Covid-19 wasn't going anywhere any time soon, there were renewed calls for cancellation or further postponement. Indeed, in April 2021, 32.8 percent of Japanese people wanted the Games to be rescheduled, and a whopping 39.2 percent felt they should be cancelled. Only one-quarter of those polled wanted the Games to go ahead.

In fact, as late as mid-May, with two months to go, there was talk of ditching the Games and it certainly didn't help that, between 25 April and 11 May 2021, a state of emergency was declared in Tokyo, forcing service venues to close. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said the Olympics would not be put first but stressed it was a decision for the IOC. Despite all of the efforts put into these games, was it all really going to be in vain?

Well, we all know the answer to that. The opening ceremony took place on 23 July and those running the roster of impressive venues readied themselves for two weeks of sporting prowess. Eight other venues had been built from scratch, including the Tokyo Aquatics Centre, Yumenoshima Park Archery Field, Sea Forest Waterway, Musashino Forest Sport Plaza, Oi Hockey Stadium, Kasai Canoe Slalom Centre and the 15,000-capacity Ariake Arena. A further ten were created as temporary structures and the remaining 25 already existed but simply needed some tweaks.

BELOW Protesters were still trying to get the event cancelled on 4 August 2021 even though there were a handful of days left to go

TOKYO KOTSU KAIKAN
Cancel the TOKYO Olympics
メダルの輝きより、いのちの輝きを！
コロナ対策
罰則より補償を
いのち、くらし、

ABOVE Spectators were allowed to watch some outdoor events, including the women's marathon final held in Saparro's Odori Park – more than 800 kilometres north of Toyko

The opening ceremony showed what the sporting events would be like, however. Just 1,000 people were able to watch the opener in person and many executives from the Games' corporate sponsors were not among them. Panasonic, NTT, NEC, Toyota and Fujitsu, for instance, said the decision not to go was made because spectators were not being allowed into the venues – a decision made on the grounds of safety as covid cases continued to rise.

Having no crowds to cheer on the athletes felt odd, though. It was also costly, with estimates suggesting the Games lost $800 million in ticket revenue. To compensate, screens were erected at venues so that fans could send messages of support and selfies to athletes. Supporter noise was pumped over sound systems and virtual cheering was also used, allowing fans to press a button when watching TV at home to show their appreciation. Athletes, meanwhile, were told they would need to socially distance themselves from one another and eat alone.

> "A lot of thought and effort went into the opening ceremony"

Still, the Games were on, even though just days before the opener, more than 70 people associated with the event had tested positive for Covid-19. There had also been other troubles to contend with, not least the Tokyo 2020 creative chief Hiroshi Sasaki resigning after saying a plus-size female comedian could appear at the ceremony as an "Olympig".

And, of course, there was still opposition to the Games: protests were held at the city's Harajuku station by people both worried about the risk to public health and frustrated at being locked out. But, as IOC president Thomas Bach said, Tokyo 2020 was the "best prepared Olympics in history" thanks to the extra year, and Japan was determined to make the most of the situation.

As such, a lot of thought and effort went into the opening ceremony to show the world just

BELOW Athletes compete in the Women's 100m hurdles semi-final, racing past empty seats at the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo

what these Games were about and the effort and sacrifice needed to stage them. The opener was largely free of ramped up razzmatazz, proving far more sombre and reflective than previous ceremonies. It was also unafraid to reference the pandemic by having Japanese boxer Arisa Tsubata training alone before revealing she had missed out on her place at the Olympics because a qualifying bout had been cancelled.

There was also a moment to reflect on those who had lost their lives to Covid-19 showing that someone had correctly read the mood. Yet there was still time to have fun, notably with an orchestral soundtrack of video game themes, nods to manga, beautiful choreography and magnificent Olympic rings made from wood in a traditional Japanese style of woodworking called yosegi-zaiku. It's often the case that an opening ceremony can set and sum up the mood of a Games and, for Japan, this was very much the case: cautious celebration.

It seemed to work. Slowly but surely, a reluctant Japan began to come round to the idea of the Olympic Games being held in their country. There were many reports in the press of people tuning into the sporting events on television or via online streams and becoming excited by what they were seeing (sales of big-screen televisions in Japan surged prior to the Games). Although the streets were largely bereft of banners and signs, people seemed to be flying the flag at home – despite tending to ignore the large outdoor screens showing events that were placed around the capital city.

What's more, there was no attempt at scaling down the events (other than having only 5,700 participants marching in the opening ceremony parade). In fact, these were the biggest Olympics ever held, with 33 sports competitions across 42 venues and a staggering 339 medal events. That was five more sports than in Rio 2016 and the additions were karate, skateboarding, baseball/softball, surfing and sport climbing. As it turned out, Japan did rather well in some of those events and they ended up winning more medals than they were ever expected to.

The first Japanese gold medalist in Tokyo 2020 was Naohisa Takato who took to the podium on 24 July wearing a mask following his victory in the judo men's -60kg contest. There were eight more gold medals for Japan in Judo, both in the women's and men's events over the next few days.

Japan's athletes also excelled in swimming, with gold for Yui Ohashi in the women's 400-metre individual medley, and women's 200-metre individual medley (the first Japanese woman to win two gold medals). There was gold too for sisters Yukako and Risako Kawai in the women's wrestling freestyle 62kg and 57kg respectively, as well as for Japan's men's baseball team.

Other events in which Japan won gold were skateboarding, table tennis, softball, gymnastics and karate and, although Japan had targeted 30 gold medals, officials were more than satisfied with 27. Indeed, that was the country's best gold tally since winning 16 at the 1964 Tokyo and 2004 Athens Games, and more than twice the tally of 12 picked up in Rio. It put Japan third

THE NEWLY INTRODUCED SPORTS

There was five new sports on the roster for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games

Fringe sports are always being added to the Olympics Games and Tokyo 2020 was no exception. This time around, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) permitted the entry of five new sports to the event, having considered, first, whether they'll appeal to young people (thereby encouraging a sporting legacy and increased take-up) and, second, how they'll affect Tokyo 2020's aim to be the first gender-balanced Games in history.

One of the new additions, sport climbing, saw participants racing up a 15-metre wall, overcoming hurdles and climbing to the highest point on an overhanging wall. How well competitors performed across all three – known as speed climbing, bouldering and lead climbing – determined which medals they were awarded. The other sports are more straightforward: competitors hoped to bag gold for the first time in karate (held in Nippon Budokan), surfing (on Tsurigasaki Beach on Japan's Pacific coast), and park and street skateboarding.

Meanwhile, baseball/softball was set to make a return having not been part of the Olympics since the Beijing 2008 Games and this brings the total number of sports for Tokyo 2020 to 33. Baseball is Japan's national sport, which is why Tokyo organisers were keen for it to return. Japan is the world's best in softball too.

New Zealand surfer Ella Williams poses beneath a giant skateboard to mark 100 days before the opening ceremony

A LOGO NOT WITHOUT DRAMA

Kenjirō Sano was accused of plagiarism after designing a similar logo to Olivier Debie

Logos tend to be controversial at the best of times. London 2012 came in for a lot of stick with some saying it resembled Lisa Simpson in a strange pose. The cost of designs often raise a few eyebrows too.

But when Kenjirō Sano unveiled the initial design for Tokyo 2020 in 2015, he was soon accused of plagiarism. Belgian designer Olivier Debie said the logo was similar to one he had created for the Théâtre de Liège venue in 2013.

Debie and the theatre filed a lawsuit against the International Olympic Committee to prevent use of Sano's logo. And, to the untrained eye, both designs did indeed look near-identical: the main difference being the addition of a red circle, which, aside from representing the flag of Japan, was said to be symbolic of a beating heart and an inclusive world.

Sano denied having ever seen Debie's work and Toshio Muto, director general of the Tokyo organising committee, said: "We're certain the two logos are different." Even so, the furore led to it being scrapped along with a slightly tweaked version created for the Paralympics. Sano was accused of having plagiarised material for a previous project, too.

A competition was then held to find a new logo and a public poll helped to decide the final emblem. Logos for the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics ended up being designed by Asao Tokolo and they were unveiled on 25 April 2016. They are made up of chequered patterns.

A Tokyo 2020 poster is removed after the original logo was said to have been plagiarised, leading to its withdrawal

behind only the United States and China in the gold medal stakes and helped them to 58 medals overall. Not bad for a group of athletes who had, in effect, lost their home advantage due to the lack of watching fans.

Not that people weren't seeing these amazing exploits. As well as the fans in Japan, millions tuned in around the world. The BBC in the United Kingdom received 104 million requests to watch online coverage of Toyko 2020 – up by some 30 million in comparison to 2016. Add to that the 36.4 million who watched on BBC television and the 372 million who watched on Discovery+ and Eurosport and it's clear people were interested in what was happening in Japan.

BELOW The Opening Ceremony for Tokyo 2020 was a somewhat sombre affair with no watching fans but it also got the Olympic Games off to a bang

Top events included, as always, the men's 100-metre race which was won by Italian sprinter Marcell Jacobs – the first man to win this event since Usain Bolt in 2004! The women's 100-metre race was also hugely popular and it was emphatically won by Elaine Thompson-Herah in what was described as the greatest ever 100m women's race. The Jamaican sprinter achieved an Olympic record and personal best of 10.61 seconds becoming the fastest woman alive, also taking gold in the 200 metres and 4x100 metre relay. Her teammates also joined her on the podium in the 100m women's race: Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce took silver (10.74 seconds) and Shericka Jackson won bronze (10.76 seconds).

> "As well as the fans in Japan, millions tuned in around the world"

Other highlights included Tom Daley becoming the first Team GB diver to win four Olympics medals, taking gold in the ten-metre synchronised dive. There were celebrations too for married cyclists Jason and Laura Kenny – Jason became the first British athlete to win seven gold medals and Laura was crowned Britain's most successful female athlete with six! Team GB's Sky Brown won bronze in the skateboarding final despite being just 13 years old. And Team USA's Katie Ledecky and Erica Sullivan won gold and silver when women were allowed to take part in the 1500 metre freestyle swimming event for the very first time.

There were so many amazing moments both during the Olympics and the Paralympics, the latter beginning on 24 August hosting 539 medal events in 22 sports, again behind closed doors. The Paralympics introduced badminton and taekwondo but Japan's athletes fared less well in a Games that was largely dominated by China. The Games as a whole were also as inclusive as they were exciting, permitting trans woman Laurel Hubbard to compete in weightlifting for New Zealand while relaxing the ban on athlete demonstrations at certain times and in specific areas, thereby allowing the taking of the knee or raising of the fist, for example.

It's just a shame, then, that huge numbers of spectators couldn't enjoy them first-hand. It was a shame too for the organisers given Tokyo 2020 had become the most expensive ever staged, with official costs estimated at $13.6 billion. But with world records broken in 24 events, huge social engagement online, increased interest in sport among girls after 15 of Japan's 27 medals were won by women, and no anti-doping violations there was lots to cheer over those 17 days.

BELOW Cyclist Jason Kenny holds his gold medal after winning the Men's Kieran final – his seventh Olympic gold in total

ABOVE The Paralympic Games went ahead between 24 August and 5 September 2021, with Tokyo being the only city to ever host the sporting event twice

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Keeping the Flames Alive

The Olympic flame is a key part of the modern Games, but how did it become so symbolic?

Words David Crookes

One of the most iconic symbols of the Olympic Games is the flame, but it hasn't always been so. Fire certainly wasn't a feature of the first modern Olympics held in Athens in 1886, although it was in Greece that the practice of maintaining a flame was originally established.

During the ancient Olympics, the Greeks would continually burn a fire on the sacred altar of Hestia, the virgin goddess of the hearth. It was deemed important because the flames were considered divine, representing the fire that the supreme Titan trickster Prometheus had stolen from the Greek god Zeus.

When the ancient Games got underway, fires would also be lit at the temple of Zeus and that of his wife, Hera. But it wasn't until the Dutch architect Jan Wils won a competition to design the Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam for the 1928 Olympic Games that the flame made its debut in the modern event.

Wils created a masterpiece: a brick façade ringing an arena capable of accommodating 31,600 spectators that won him an Olympic gold medal in the architecture competition. What was of special note was a 40-metre-high tower called the Marathontoren, designed and built so that a fire could burn on top. Use of a flame was once again established.

As such, the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles also saw a torch incorporated into the main stadium as part of work to expand the seating capacity to 101,574. Again, the fire burned throughout the Games above the peristyle at the east end of the stadium. But when the games reached Berlin in 1936, the flames took on an extra significance.

LEFT Paavo Nurmi lights the flame for the Olympic Games in Helsinki in 1952 – the year when the flame was transported by aeroplane for the first time

Two years earlier, Carl Diem, the chief organiser of Berlin's Olympic Games, had an idea: to bring the ancient and modern Games together by organising a relay to take the flame from Greece to the German host city. There was no precedent, since the Greeks had never attempted a relay themselves. Nazi Party propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, however, believed it would become a showpiece act.

The relay began on 20 July 1936 in Olympia, Greece, at the site where the temple of Hera used to stand. On the suggestion of International Olympic Committee member Jean Ketseas, a parabolic mirror was used to reflect the searing rays of the sun so that they would concentrate on a blazing hot focal point that, in the presence of a gas torch, would ignite. This honoured the ancient Greek method of using a skaphia to concentrate rays on dry grass.

All that was then needed was to transport the torch from an ancient empire to a country determined to start a new one. Greek runner Konstantinos Kondylis began proceedings, lowering his torch into the mirror as a dozen women dressed in virginal white tunics looked on. Then 3,331 runners were ready to line up along a 3,187-mile route – they had 12 days and 11 nights to complete the task of passing the flame from one torch to the next.

Each torch was built by the armament developer Friedrich Krupp, but despite being designed with a magnesium-burning element that would keep it aflame in all weathers, it would burn for just ten minutes.

Even so, as long as each runner could light their torch and get to the next runner before it burned out, the flame would continue all the way to the Olympic Stadium. There, German Chancellor Adolf

BELOW Paralympic archer Antonio Rebollo aims a flaming arrow at the Olympic cauldron in Barcelona in 1992

THE FLAME GAME

How a creative prankster tricked Sydney with a fake Olympic torch

Look at the image pictured here very carefully. Do you think that you could make your own replica version of the official 1956 Melbourne Olympics torch?

Veterinary student Barry Larkin thought so. He stuck together a silver-painted chair leg and a pudding can, before stuffing a pair of worn underpants inside, soaking it in kerosene and setting it alight.

This attempt would not have registered with the wider world, but Larkin went further. He not only ran with it during the Olympic torch relay as 30,000 spectators clapped and roared him on, but he also handed his contraption to the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Pat Hills.

The organisers had expected another man, Harry Dillon, to present the mayor with the torch at Sydney Town Hall. The police, unsure what Dillon looked like, mistook Larkin for him and gave him an escort.

Hills took the burning torch and began his speech. It was only then that a horrified aide whispered in Hill's ear and the mayor realised he'd been pranked. By this time, Larkin had become lost in the crowd.

Although we can look back and laugh today, the crowd didn't find it very funny, and order needed to be resumed until the real one arrived ten minutes later. But there was another serious side to the story.

Larkin and eight friends concocted their plan in protest at the relay's Nazi origins. When they got back to university later that day, they were met with great applause.

The real torch of the 1956 Melbourne Summer Olympic Games

BELOW The first-ever Olympic relay runs through the streets of Berlin in 1936 en route to the Olympic Stadium

Hitler was able to watch as German runner Fritz Schilgen ran the last leg and used the torch to light the cauldron. Everything went to plan, and the tradition continued after the enforced break of the Olympics due to World War II.

The origin of the flame is now written as Rule 13 of the Olympic Charter: "The Olympic flame is the flame which is kindled in Olympia under the authority of the IOC," it says. Over time, it has come to symbolise the light of knowledge, spirit and life, but there have been tweaks to the ceremony around it along the way, as well as some symbolic acts, not least when Corporal Dimitrelis removed his uniform and weapons before starting the relay for the London Games in 1948, highlighting a desire for post-war peace.

These days, after the torch is lit at the Temple of Hera by an actress playing the role of an Ancient Greek high priestess calling for Apollo, god of light, to send the sun's rays, it's taken on a 2,000-kilometre relay around Greece, courtesy of 500 torchbearers. The journey halts at the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens, an impressive multi-purpose venue built entirely of marble.

The stadium is where the first modern Olympic Games were held, but it's also the venue where the torch is handed over to the organisers of the forthcoming Games in a spectacular ceremony that is usually watched by a crowd of around 30,000 people. The performance has included the Greek Presidential Guard, the City of Athens Marching Band, and a performance of 30 Caryatids Korres.

For the Tokyo 2020 Games, this ceremony took place on 19 March 2020 in a scaled-back event due to the coronavirus pandemic. The relay was also suspended until 2021, when it was scheduled to travel around Japan before arriving at the New National Stadium in Tokyo for the opening ceremony on 23 July.

It's the first time the relay has been delayed, but it's not the only unusual thing to have happened to this event. As well as runners, the torch has been carried in the past across water and in the air. And when the equestrian

BELOW The Olympic flame and cauldron of the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal, Canada

events for the 1956 Melbourne Games were held 15,500 kilometres away in Stockholm some six months before the Games were officially declared open, the torch was carried on horseback.

"The torch has been carried in the past across water and in the air"

Although it's also been carried by camel, canoe, underwater and into space (three times, albeit without the flame), perhaps the most unusual leg of the torch relay was when the flame was transported from Greece to Ottawa for the Montreal Games in Canada 1976 using heat sensors, satellite signals and laser beams. With the signals converted into a flame, it was then taken the 200 kilometres from Ottawa to Montreal.

Unfortunately, those were the Games when rain doused the flame at the Olympic Stadium. A plumber called M Pierre Bouchard was aghast, and decided to quickly make amends, grabbing a newspaper, setting it ablaze using his cigarette lighter and using it to re-light the cauldron. Since it wasn't a pure flame, however, the Olympic officials were horrified and, after extinguishing the flames again, they used back-up torches to keep it going.

So where do those backups come from? Every time the original flame is lit from the parabolic mirror, more torches are created just in case the main one is doused. It has certainly come in handy over the years, although current torch designs have two flames inside, one of which is hidden and able to reignite the visible part if needed.

The design of the cauldrons has also changed, although not necessarily to keep the flame burning, but to add a spin on how it is lit and how it looks. We've seen the cauldron look like an olive leaf in 2004 and, four years later, one which represented an unrolling scroll. We've seen the cauldron lit through water in 2000 in Sydney by athlete Cathy Freeman, who was ringed by fire (she later won gold in the 400 metres) and, in 1992, by shooting a fiery arrow over the top.

And yet there have been people keen on extinguishing the flame, which was certainly the case after the relay became an ambitious multi-country jaunt in 2004.

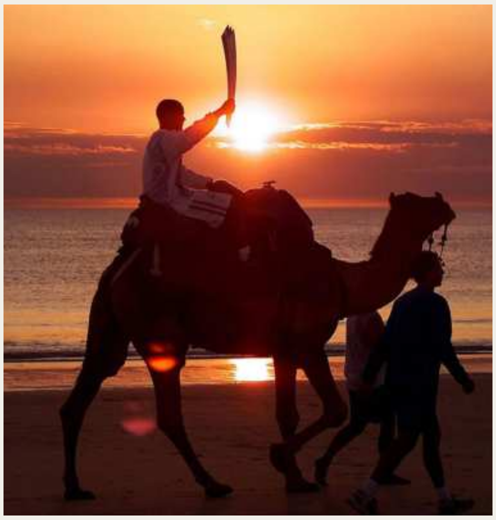
That year was peaceful enough. Greece took the torch to every habitable continent, giving people in Africa and South America a glimpse of the Olympic flame on their own soil for the very first time. It wasn't easy: special measures had to be brought in, including the use of modified miners lamps to keep the flame going while it was on a Boeing 747 flying from one country to another.

But the journey covered some 78,000 kilometres, having begun on 25 March 2004 and ended on 13 August 2004, made use of 11,300 torchbearers, and was so successful that it was repeated four years later for Beijing 2008.

That's when trouble began. China called its 2008 relay the 'Journey of Harmony', but the resulting 21-nation tour was targeted by human rights groups. The flame was extinguished several times in Paris, and police officers moved it on to a bus for protection. Relay routes were also cancelled or slashed, so the IOC went back to the policy of only holding torch relays in Greece and the country hosting the event.

Even so, the flame is protected. There's a team of roughly ten flame attendants who look after the fire day and night, because it has to keep burning. After all, it's important that the magic and symbolism of the Olympic Games remains alive. Only when the sport is over and the closing ceremony draws to an end will it be extinguished until next time.

BELOW The Olympic flame is carried on board a camel on Cable Beach in Broome, northwestern Australia on its way to Sydney for the 2000 opening ceremony



ABOVE Greek actress Theodora Siarkou plays the high priestess ahead of the Turin 2006 Winter Games. The Winter Games introduced the flame for the first time in 1936

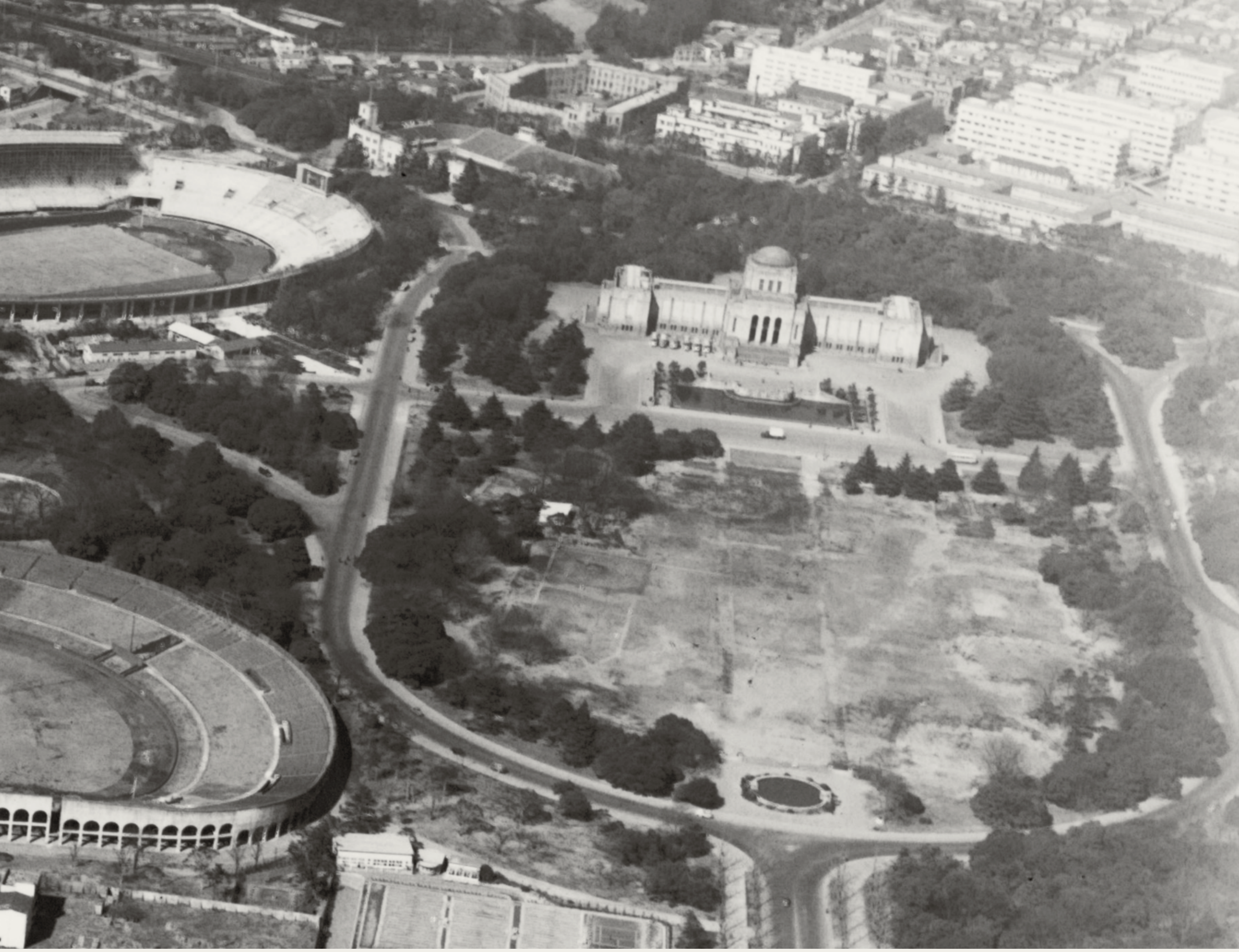
ABOVE The Olympic torch handover to the next host nation is carried out at the Panathinaiko Stadium in Athens

© Alamy, Getty Images

Hosting the Olympic Games

Countries race long and hard to host the Olympics, but even if they win, they're never sure they're going to bag gold

Words David Crookes



ABOVE All eyes were on Tokyo in 1964 when it successfully showcased the best Japan had to offer and revitalised the country

Just one month after Japan was hit by the largest earthquake the nation had ever recorded, the country began looking ahead to brighter times. It may have felt premature given the subsequent tsunami that had also led to a nuclear disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant. But Tokyo's governor had a plan that he believed would put Japan on the road to recovery.

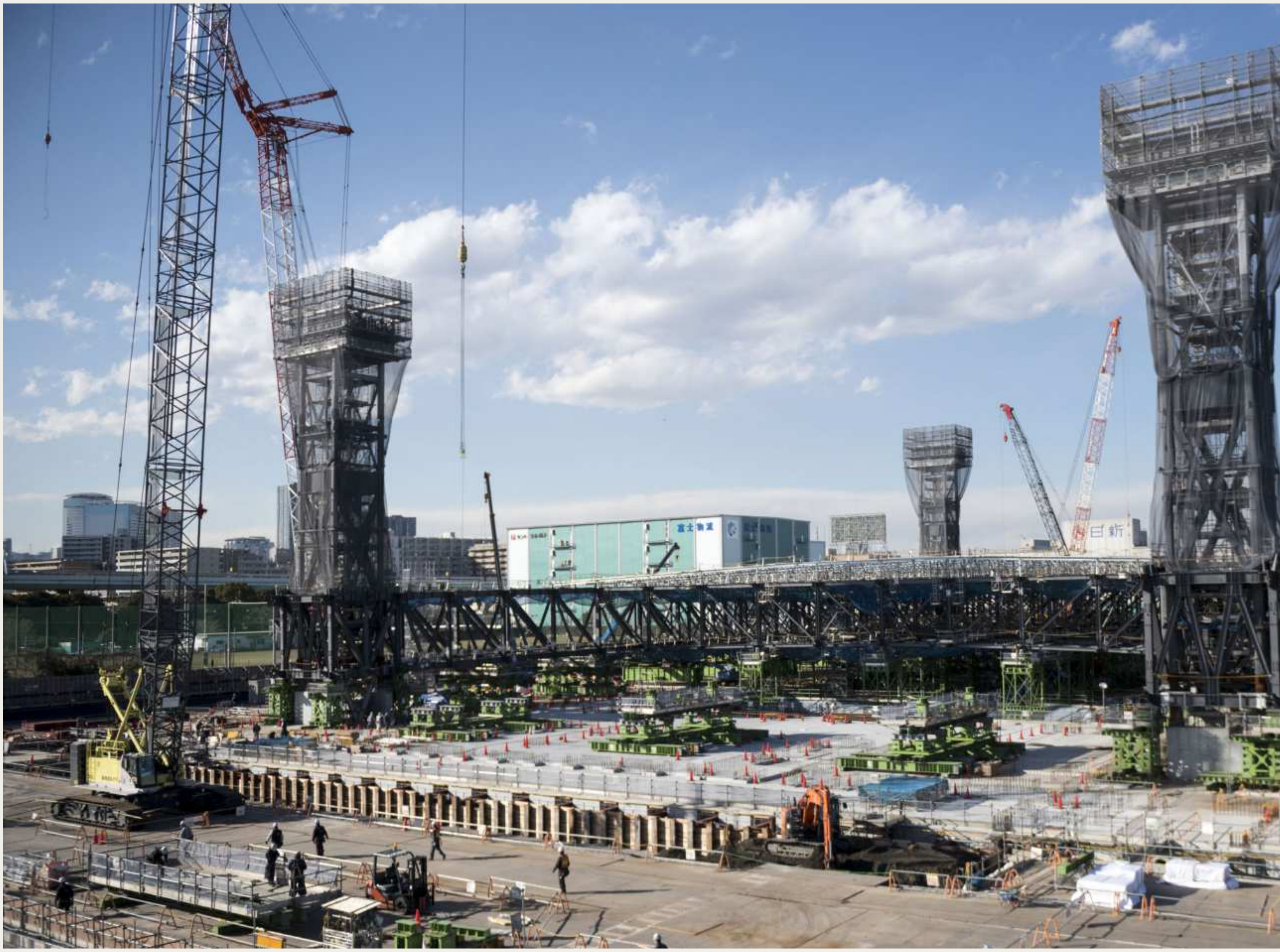
In April 2011, Shintaro Ishihara announced the capital city's intention to bid to host the 2020 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. Toyko had unsuccessfully bid to host the event in 2016, but Ishihara felt the city would have a better chance this time and believed the country had learned from its recent past endeavour.

In the race to host the Games in 2016, Tokyo had been up against Chicago, Madrid, Baku, Doha, Prague and Rio de Janeiro. Tokyo made the shortlist of four only to be eliminated in the second round of three, helping pave the way for Rio to triumph that time around. But, while it was the third time Japan had failed to convince the International Olympic Committee (IOC) – it had put Nagoya up for 1988 and Osaka for 2008 – it was now more confident than ever that the time was right.

Berlin, Busan, Cape Town, Doha, Rome and Istanbul had already expressed an interest in bidding for 2020 when Tokyo threw its own hat into the ring once again. Yet Tokyo's attempt was strong enough to see it go up against a shortlist of five, pitting it against Istanbul, Baku, Doha and Madrid. This time it won, beating the Turkish rival bid by 60 votes to 36, having already emerged as favourite against Istanbul and Madrid in the first round. Public support was high and Japan was overjoyed. In the run up to the announcement, some 67 per cent of Tokyo's citizens were supporting the bid, a rise of 23 per cent over the preceding year. The news came as the IOC Evaluation Committee was in Tokyo on a four-day inspection tour so the Japanese bid team had a spring in their step as they showed members of the Olympics group the plans to replace the national stadium with a new, modern venue and gave them a peek of other sites such as the one earmarked for table tennis.

Visits such as these have been part and parcel of the process of hosting the Olympics and Paralympics over the years. Cities fall over themselves to impress the IOC by displaying bold ambition and by seeking to show how welcome the Games will be. As you can imagine, in light of this, the pursuit of hosting the Olympics can feel as arduous a task as trying to compete in them. But how does it all work and what rings do bidding cities have to leap through?

The first step in the bidding process comes from within a country itself, usually as a joint decision between a nation's Olympic Committee and its government. Traditionally this has required some foresight (and a good dollop of stamina) because



THE INTERNET GAMES

How Tokyo 2020 was flush with technology

Tokyo is known for being at the forefront of electronics, so it's no surprise that the city wanted to utilise its cutting-edge technologies. For the 2020 Summer Olympics, it was set to bring the Internet of Things to the fore with the development of smart stadiums that streamed video replays and real-time stats to the mobile devices of both spectators and athletes.

Even the most well-laid plans can falter in the face of unforeseen circumstances, however. Japan was forced to re-adapt its entire Olympic Games strategy when the Covid-19 pandemic threw the spanner of all spanners into the works. The 2020 Olympic Games were delayed by a year, and when the event kicked off in earnest, it was extremely different to any Olympics that came before it.

Due to the fears of spreading the disease, an emphasis was placed on livestreaming the events. Stadiums may have been empty, save for the competitors, but watchers were able to supply virtual crowd noises to encourage their representatives to carry on.

Screens were also installed in the city, enabling people to watch the events from outside – where Covid-19 was less likely to spread thanks to better ventilation. It was one of the most memorable Olympics in living memory, and Japan pulled off the impossible event better than anyone could have envisioned at the time.

BELOW The Olympics are so special to some host cities that they're celebrated decades on. Sydney celebrates 20 years by projecting medal winners on to the Sydney Opera House in 2020

the actual bid process begins years in advance of an Olympic Games given there is so much to think about.

One of the key considerations is cost: over the years, the Olympic Games has chewed up money, and even the inaugural 1896 games in Athens went over its 250,000-drachma budget by six times. As more competitors have taken part from a larger number of countries, so the cost has risen further. The Rio Olympics in 2016 cost $13 billion, so there really does have to be a real appetite for wanting to host the Games these days.

Sometimes that hunger wanes. In 2015, the residents of Hamburg voted against hosting the Olympics and Paralympics in 2024 believing the money could be better spent. Rome and Budapest also withdrew, leaving Paris to go head to head with Los Angeles. This spooked the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which decided the bid process needed to change. So, for the first time, it was decided in 2017 that they would choose the next two host cities at the same time. Paris was handed 2024 and Los Angeles was confirmed as the sole candidate for 2028. It could then put into place a new method of working.

In the past, it used to be the case that bidding cities would put themselves forward nine years in advance. They'd have two years to make their presentations and meet the IOC, drafting documents that showcased the venues and the merits of taking the Games to a bidding city.

Then the voting would begin by members of the IOC. Careful consideration would be given to the proposed venues, either new or existing. Members would also look at the plans for the Olympic Village, accommodation, transport, telecommunications, the environmental impact, weather, finance, marketing, sports experience and safety among other criteria. The support of government and the public has long been deemed important, too.

Such criteria is still considered when looking for future hosts, but the process is now more targeted and flexible. One of the big problems with the bidding process is that it has proven ever-more costly. Just applying to bid has cost tens of thousands of pounds and being chosen as a finalist has incurred costs running in the hundreds of thousands. But that's just the entry fee. There's tens of millions spent on lobbying and fine-tuning proposals. Given the costs and the time spent on bids, it was clear a new approach was needed. The IOC says it wants to prevent potential hosts from unnecessarily wasting money by having permanent, ongoing dialogue. Indeed, it says the emphasis is now on "exploratory, non-committal continuous dialogue with interested parties", during which a bidder's chance of success will be developed.

These talks are held with the Future Hosts Commissions for the Summer and Winter Games, which are now overseeing interest from potential hosts. Crucially, hosting isn't being confined to single cities any more either. Multiple cities, a region, a country or even multiple nations can also express a desire to host the Olympics and Paralympic Games. As a result, we may also see more double awards as we did with Paris and Los Angeles.

"There's tens of millions spent on lobbying and fine-tuning proposals"

"This is the evolution of the Olympic Agenda 2020 revolution," IOC President Thomas Bach said in 2019 when the changes were announced.

As it stands, the IOC has entered "detailed discussions" with the Brisbane 2032 Committee and the Australian Olympic Committee about the capital of Queensland following Los Angeles. Should the city meet the requirements, then Brisbane will be proposed as a future host. The Gold Coast hosted the Commonwealth Games, so the area has 80 per cent of the venues already built. At the same time, the IOC is talking with other cities and these could either overtake

BELOW Changing the face of Barcelona: the Port Olímpic marina opened in 1991 and hosted the sailing events the following year

"SPORTACCORD GOLD COAST 2019"

ABOVE IOC President Thomas Bach praises the city of Brisbane as the Gold Coast's bid to host the Summer Games in 2032 is considered

Brisbane for 2032 (now unlikely) or be proposed for 2036 and later games.

But just why are some cities (and now regions or countries) so keen to host the Olympics? What advantages could the event have other than providing a distraction and a sticking plaster for past problems?

In the case of Tokyo, it bid for the Games before the earthquake and continued to want it afterwards. But then the city saw starkly what the event did for the country in 1964. "The Tokyo 1964 Games completely transformed Japan, enhanced Japanese people's awareness of the outside world and sparked the rapid growth of Japan's economy," the official website says. In short, it granted prestige.

To that end, it's fair to say that the Olympics and Paralympics are seen as a badge of honour and hosting them attracts investment, not only in amazing world-class sporting facilities but in long-term infrastructure. It can create employment for many years to come and bring in business that may have otherwise overlooked the city in favour of others. For nations looking to drag themselves out of past troubles, they can be ideal.

When the previous games were held in 1964, Japan had been rebuilding following its defeat and destruction during the Second World War. It was looking to modernise and it built 36 new Olympic sites that it hoped would impress the 20,000 spectators and 6,348 foreign athletes who watched and competed. New roads and railways were constructed, too.

Today we've seen a similar revitalisation with a new stadium and new venues, but back then Japan wanted to showcase its potential in other ways as well. Since the country was becoming an electronics powerhouse at this time, it was no accident that it looked to show the opening and closing ceremonies in colour and use slow motion during sporting events. Fast forward to now and we can see how Tokyo deftly tapped into the Internet of Things to help the event run smoothly.

It was all part of the plan to make Tokyo 2020 the Renewal Games, as they've been dubbed, but Japan was not the first and nor will it be the last to hope for a turnaround fuelled by the Olympics. Barcelona, for instance, wished for the same and its successful bid worked wonders. Suddenly, the Catalan city that had been in long-term decline due to an absence of investment under General Franco's rule was being placed on the global map. It gained two miles of beach thanks to sand imported from Egypt as well as an attractive marina. City parks were created along with ring roads. Industrial buildings were demolished and the glam-factor was turned up to ten.

> "The Olympics and Paralympics are seen as a badge of honour and hosting them attracts investment"

So successful was Barcelona's transformation that other cities suffering their own decline wanted in on the action, hence Manchester's two failed bids for 1996 and 2000. Barcelona may have exceeded its budget and spent $11.4 billion on hosting the Games, but unemployment was slashed and tourism boomed – precisely what had been forecast. Yet that is not to say the Olympics is always a magic wand. There are disadvantages too and pain can be so easily felt.

When the Olympics work well for a city, they truly benefit the host. Los Angeles made a profit in 1984 because its facilities were largely in place and they only needed to be upgraded, but don't fooled into thinking that hosting the Olympics is a fast track to riches.

Most cities actually make a loss and we saw that starkly with Athens in 2004, which is said to have cost as much as $15 billion, leaving taxpayers to foot the bill for years. In fact, the Olympic Games are believed to have led to the 2009 economic crisis in the country and it has sat uneasily in the minds of many potential bidding teams.

It's why the IOC wants to maintain an ongoing dialogue, and one of the key concerns it raises is legacy. The organisation is mindful that there can be a winner's curse where overspending to impress IOC members becomes a city's economic downfall. The IOC needs hosts to make the most out of the Olympics and view their time hosting the event in as positive a light as possible in order to continue attracting interest.

Tokyo 2020 certainly saw legacy as a motivation for hosting the Games – "The 2020 Games will enable Japan, now a mature economy,

ABOVE Olympics bids are so important that the big guns are rolled out. President Barack Obama makes the case for Chicago 2016 in 2009

GOING FOR BROKE

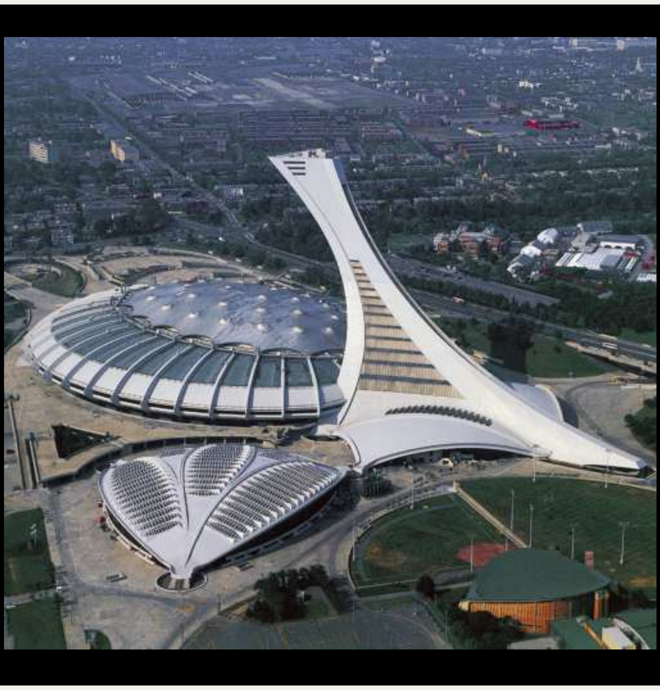
How the Montreal Olympics took the Canadian city to the financial edge

Canada has only held the Games once: in 1976. The Paralympics were hosted by Toronto and the Olympics were in Montreal, and yet, for the latter city, it's an event that will never be forgotten – even by people who weren't born at the time.

Montreal was awarded the event in 1970, beating Moscow and Los Angeles. It therefore had six years to get things ready, but it was perhaps not enough time. When the opening ceremony got underway on 17 July, construction workers were still clearing the Olympic Stadium. And when the dust settled, what was left was a financial mess.

Estimates had suggested it would cost C$120 million to stage the Olympics in Montreal, but the cost overran by 1,250 per cent, some 13 times the original estimate. It took more than 30 years to pay the debt, crippling the city's finances.

But that wasn't even the full story. Half of the money was spent on the stadium and, while it was impressive enough, holding 73,000 for the Games, it's largely been seen as a white elephant. Not helping matters was a refusal by the IOC to ban New Zealand from competing when the country sent its All Black rugby team to apartheid South Africa. This led to a boycott by 22 African nations. The Munich massacre in 1972 also meant security costs rocketed, adding to Montreal's woes.



The Olympic Stadium in Montreal, Canada, nicknamed The Big O or, for some, The Big Owe

BELOW **When a city doesn't know what to do with its venues after the Olympics, they can, as in Athens after 2004, begin to show signs of decay**

BELOW **Even when the Olympics are over, work continues, as was the case after London 2012 when the Olympic Park was being transformed at a cost of £292 million**

HUNTER
PLANT HIRE

to promote future changes throughout the world, and leave a positive legacy for future generations," it's website stated – but it still required foresight and intricate planning.

It means hosts are encouraged to consider how the Olympic and Paralympic venues will be used when the Games are over to avoid facilities rotting in the wake of the closing ceremony. We've seen how this can happen. In the case of Rio 2016, venues have ended up falling apart within a very short amount of time. In the case of London 2012, some, including the Olympic Stadium, became bogged down by indecision.

Legacy isn't just about buildings, though. Many organisers want the spirit of the Olympics to continue well into the future, inspiring young people to take up sport and bring opportunities to areas where they were once lacking. And, of course, if the world-class facilities are kept up to scratch, people can use them in the future to improve their sporting prowess and may become the Olympians of the future.

THE BRITISH OLYMPIC BID
MANCHESTER 2000

ABOVE **Manchester, seen here the morning after its hopes of hosting the 2000 Olympic Games were dashed, believed the event would revitalise the post-industrial city**

© Getty Images

Keeping to Tradition

The opening and closing ceremonies are peppered with key events that have evolved over the decades

Words David Crookes

Opening and closing ceremonies can feel like bookends to the showcase of strength, stamina and fitness of the Olympic Games, but they are huge attractions in their own right. After all, some 2 billion viewers tuned into TV coverage of the opening of the Beijing Summer Olympics on 8 August 2008, and just under half that number became glued to the openers of London 2012 and Rio 2018.

But they're not cheap to produce. Beijing's four-hour spectacle cost a cool $100 million, packing The Bird's Nest stadium with 15,000 performers as it promoted the greatness of China's history and culture.

London's astounding effort cost a more palatable $35 million - yet came hot on the heels of a devastating economic downturn. It enlisted the skills of acclaimed film director Danny Boyle, and gave the world a skydiving Queen (and a bumbling Mr Bean). There was even time to flag up the virtues of the country's National Health Service.

But that's part of the tradition of the Olympic ceremonies: a chance for hosts to show the world their imaginative flair. We've seen it throughout the decades, whether in Los Angeles (1984), Seoul (1998), Barcelona (1992), Atlanta (1996), Sydney (2000) or Athens (2004) - each one hoping to be more spellbinding than the others.

It wasn't always that way. The inaugural opener held in Athens in 1896 was relatively low on gloss. Athletes were grouped by nation, and there was a speech, music and a choir performance of an Olympic hymn, but little else in the way of razzmatazz.

Things began to pick up in London in 1908 when the tradition of athletes marching into a stadium behind their nations' flags first took root. Around 2,000 athletes made their appearance in London's newly built White City Stadium, where they were received by King Edward VIII. Soon, the opening and closing ceremonies would be established as an art form.

In Stockholm in 1912, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern games, had athletes entering in alphabetical order by nation. A hymn was sung, prayers were read, and there was a speech by King Gustav V, followed by a trumpet fanfare.

By 1920, however, a ceremony protocol was established for the games in Antwerp. It was the first time the Olympic flag was flown (the five rings having been designed by de Coubertin). It was the first Games to hear the Olympic Oath, and the first to release doves as a symbol of peace (these games being the first since World War I).

For the most part, the traditions introduced in 1920 have stuck, with a few tweaks here and there. Indeed, today, the structure is well-established and, aside from the fun aspects of the opening ceremony - when the event gets down to showbusiness - there are set formalities that always take place.

First of all, the president of the International Olympic Committee has to meet the host country's head of state twice: once at the entrance

RIGHT **French athletes enter the Coliseum Stadium during the opening ceremony of the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games**

FRANCE
ES of the XXIIIrd OLYMPIAD
LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA 1984

BELOW The Olympic cauldron is lit in Seoul in 1988. This was the last year doves were physically released

> “Athletes from Greece always lead the parade, simply because the Games originated in that country“

ABOVE The Olympic torch is carried into the stadium – seen here in the 1936 Games in Berlin – so that it can light the Olympic cauldron

to the stadium in which the opening ceremony is taking place, and again in the stand designated for the top officials.

The national anthem of the host country must also be played, coinciding with the hoisting of the nation’s flag. This can take place during the artistic program – the element of the ceremony that allows the city to put its own mark on the proceeding. Once those displays are over, though, the traditions really begin to kick in as the ceremony starts to tick them off one by one.

Most prominently, there is the Parade of Nations, which sticks to the tradition laid down by de Coubertin. Athletes enter the stadium, grouped by country, and the order they appear is alphabetical according to the language of the host nation. There are two exceptions: the athletes from Greece always lead the parade, simply because the Games originated in that country, and the host nation always enters last.

The athletes are led by a flag bearer for each country – someone specially chosen by a nation’s Olympic association or their teammates. It’s viewed as a prestigious role, since the selected athlete is representing their team and their country, making them a captain of sorts. The choice can also be a reflection of the importance of a particular sport.

Once the athletes are gathered in the stadium, there is a release of doves. This ritual began in 1896 during the closing ceremony in Athens as a method of signalling a country’s victory. It then became part of the opening ceremony in 1920 as a symbol of peace.

Back then, the organisers used real birds, and continued to do so until 1988. But then a grisly event took place. Unfortunately, when that year’s flock of doves was released in Seoul, they flew over to the Olympic cauldron. When the flame was lit at the end of the torch relay, they ended up being burned live before a horrified television audience. That’s why the release of doves today is entirely symbolic; no birds are harmed in contemporary ceremonies.

The formalities then continue with a set of speeches. Starting with the president of the Organising Committee, the microphone is handed to the president of the IOC, before the head of state is asked to declare the Olympic Games open. Rule 55 of the Olympic Charter sets out the words of the pronouncement. “I declare open the Games of [city] celebrating the [number] Olympiad of the modern era,” the head of state will say.

With the Games now open, the Olympic flag can be carried into the stadium, unfurled and raised, as established in a tradition dating back to 1920. As this takes place, the Olympic Hymn is played, its music written by Greek opera composer Spyridon Samaras, with lyrics created by Greek poet Kostis Palamas.

The anthem was first performed in 1896, but subsequent nations commissioned their own compositions for later Games. That stopped in 1958 when the IOC declared the Hymn official, and it’s been played at every Olympics since 1960.

Olympic Oaths are also taken. There is one by a competitor on behalf of all athletes, continuing a tradition dating back to 1920, promising to respect and abide by the rules. There is another, introduced in 1972, which sees an official from the host country promising to be impartial. In 2012, another addition was made: an oath taken by a coach promising sportsmanship. Once the oaths are taken, it’s then on to the grand finale.

Having been carried by a relay from Olympia in Greece, the Olympic torch is brought into the stadium by the final torchbearer, who then completes a lap of the stadium. The flame is used to light the Olympic cauldron, and it’ll remain burning until the closing ceremony – a tradition that began in 1928.

So what happens at the closing ceremony? Well, there are still formalities and traditions, but this event is much more of a party, a chance for athletes to celebrate and let their hair down with a short artistic program supplemented by lots of pop music. Here, the host’s flag is hoisted and the national anthem is played. But while there is a parade of flags headed by the flag of Greece and ended by the host country, the athletes are free to walk out in any order together.

BELOW **Closing ceremonies often go out with a bang, thanks to amazing fireworks displays**

BELOW **Although Icelandic, pop star Björk put on an ambitious musical performance in Athens in 2004 as part of the ceremony's artistic program**

This is a tradition, too. A student in Australia, John Ian Wing, wrote anonymously to the IOC in 1956, suggesting the athletes mingle as a sign of peace. He was worried that Cold War uncertainty, boycotts of the Olympics and a brawl between the USSR and Hungary during a water polo match had created division that sport could heal. A "peace march", Wing argued, would be just the ticket.

Once all the athletes are inside the stadium, there's a chance to hold one final medal ceremony, typically the men's marathon, which reaches the finishing line in the lead up to the closing event. It's a great reminder that sporting achievement can bring people together.

The closing ceremony is keen to emphasise the work of ordinary people, too. As such, a bouquet of flowers is handed to a representative of the volunteers by newly elected members of the IOC Athletes' Commission by way of a thank you. Then the flag of Greece is hoisted as the country's national anthem is played, before the flag of the next country to host the Games is also raised.

Now it's time to lower the flag of the current host while the Olympic Hymn is played. When it's taken out of the stadium, the mayor of the host city hands an Olympic flag to the IOC president, who then hands it to the mayor of the next city like a figurative passing of the torch. Since 1976, the next city gets to perform a mini artistic ceremony lasting less than ten minutes in order to introduce itself. Again, it's a good promotion of a country's culture.

Yet the end is near. Once the IOC president makes his closing speech, the Olympic flame is extinguished and the Games are over. The focus is now on the next event in four years' time, but the one that has just passed has hopefully left many happy memories behind.

ABOVE **As head of state, Queen Elizabeth II makes a speech during the London 2012 opening ceremony**

FLAGGING UP SOME PROBLEMS

The Parade of Nations can bring simmering tensions to the fore

When London hosted the first Parade of Nations in 1908, it wasn't short of controversy. Finland's athletes arrived late and were forced to come out last. They were also told they had to march under the Russian flag, which they refused to do.

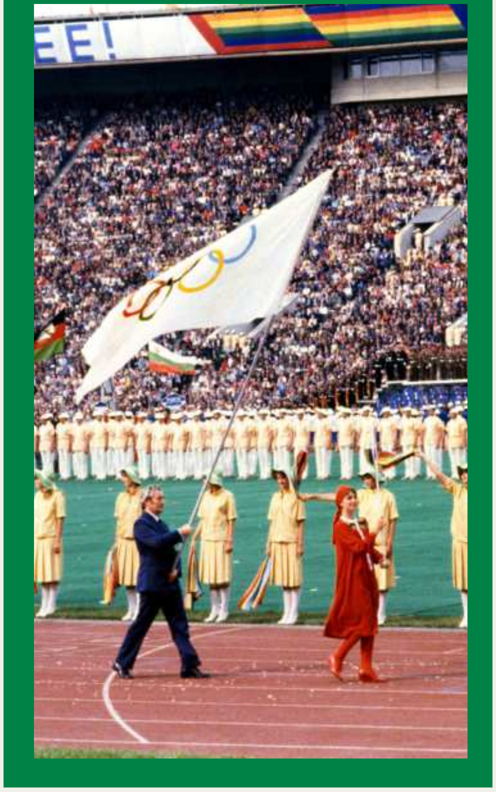
Finland at the time had no official flag, but the athletes had hoped to march under one of three alternatives: the coat of arms of Finland, a flag bearing the text 'Finlandia', or another that had 'Suomi-Finland' written across it.

All three were refused by the organisers, who had the athletes walk behind a flag bearer carrying a piece of cardboard taken from the dressing room door that said: 'Finland'. And yet that's not all.

Irish-American flag-bearer Ralph Rose refused to dip the flag in front of the host country's dignitaries in 1909, which some historians say was due to his disdain for the British. It became an American tradition after they refused to dip at the 1936 Games too, this time because of Adolf Hitler.

Sometimes, athletes don't march behind their own flag at all. In 1980, the United States initiated a boycott of the Olympic Games in Moscow. This led Great Britain and Ireland to send representatives to enter the stadium during the opening ceremony under the Olympic flag.

Dick Palmer flying the Olympic flag instead of the Union Flag at the 1980 Moscow games angered the Soviets



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THE OLYMPIANS

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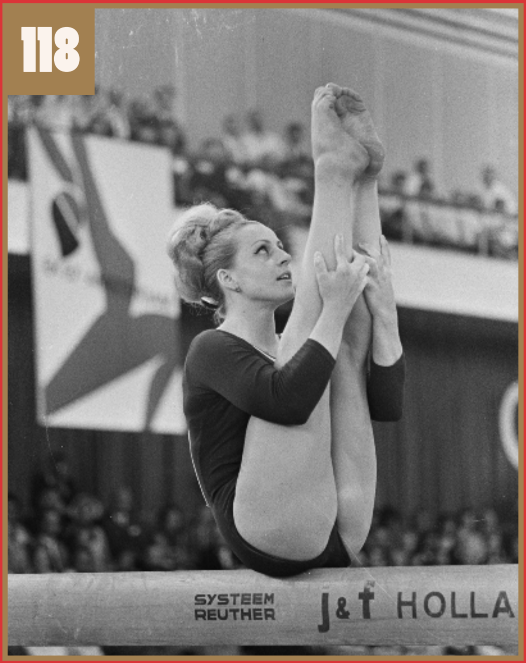
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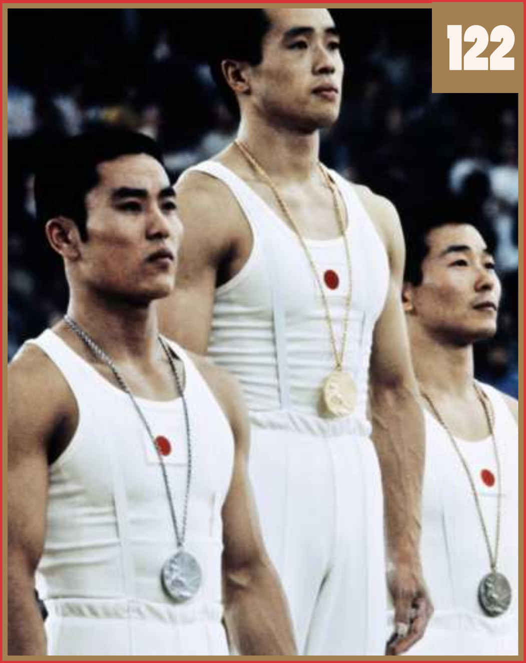

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Barcelona '92
Barcelona '92

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ULTRAGIGUE

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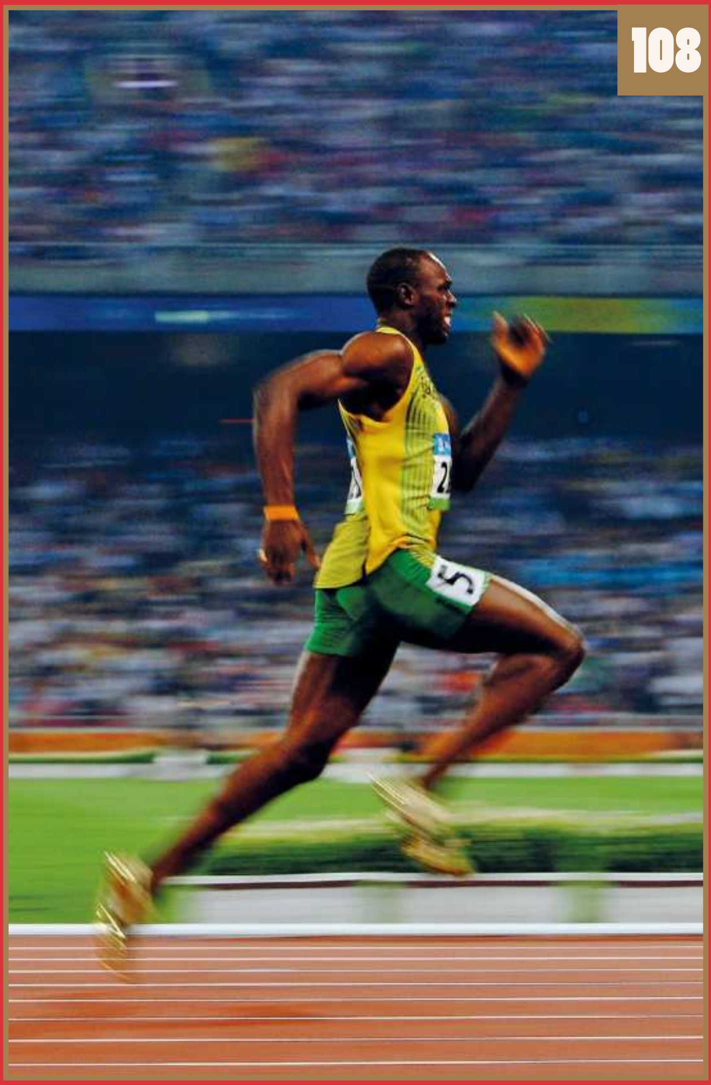
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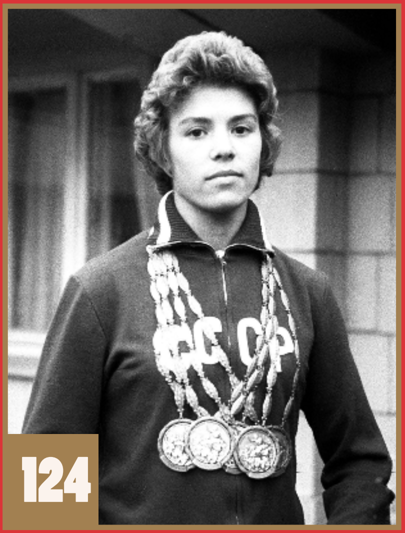
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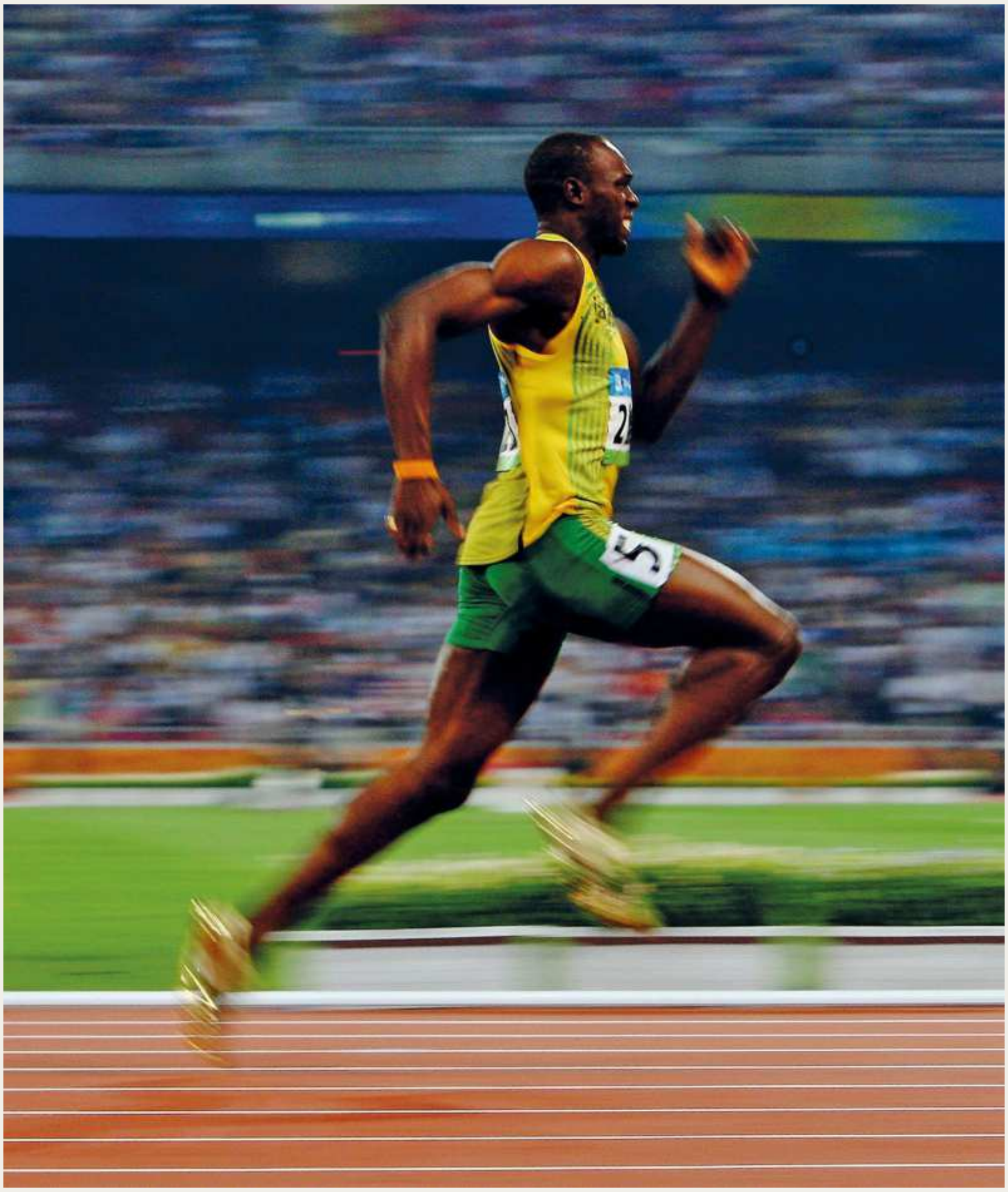
Usain Bolt

This athlete's unbelievable speed and superhuman grace make him one of the greatest ever and the fastest man alive

Olympics competed in: 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016

Words Dominic Eames



ABOVE **Bolt is widely considered to be the greatest sprinter of all time, holding world records for the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay races**

Usain Bolt is considered by most experts to be the greatest sprinter in the history of athletics. But he didn't always want to be a track and field star. At a young age, he had aspirations of playing soccer.

Bolt was the son of two grocers from the Trelawny Parish in Jamaica. He was born on 21 August 1986 and as he grew up he dreamed of playing for European giants Real Madrid or Manchester United. Even though he was passionate about the sport, he was convinced to instead focus on track and field.

At first glance, the decision seemed harsh, but he gradually saw the light. The young sprinter was a prodigy. At the age of 15, Bolt won gold in the 200 metres at the World Junior Championship in Jamaica. When he was 16 years old, he broke the junior (19 and under) 200-metre record with a time of 20.13 seconds. And at 17, he was the first teenager to come in at under 20 seconds in the 200 metres with a record-breaking time of 19.93 seconds. However, his victorious streak was cut short due to a hamstring injury he suffered early on in the Athens Olympics in 2004.

The injury didn't put a stop to his young career, but it did slow him down. However, setbacks proved to be a good thing at this point in his career. Bolt increased his focus and his renewed dedication to training paid off. His perseverance led to a silver medal in 2007 at the World Championships. A year later in New York, Bolt beat the 100-metre world champion, Tyson Gay, setting a new 100-metre record of 9.72 seconds in the process.

Now in the prime of his career, Bolt became a global phenomenon and saved some of his best performances for the biggest of stages – the 2008, 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games. Bolt completed an unprecedented 'triple-triple' – winning three sprint golds in the 100-metre, 200-metre and 4x100-

ABOVE **Bolt after beating the 200-metre world record with a time of 19.30 seconds at the 2008 Beijing Olympics**

metre relay races in three consecutive Olympics – joining Paavo Nurmi of Finland and Carl Lewis of the United States on nine gold medals; however, he would later be stripped of a gold won during the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

In addition to his Olympic success, he won 11 world championship titles, and still holds the current world records for the 100 metres at 9.58 seconds and the 200 metres at 19.19 seconds, both of which he set during the 2009 World Athletics Championships in Berlin.

> "While you can daydream for free, goals don't come without a price: Time, Effort, Sacrifice & Sweat"

Despite the doping scandal and gold medal controversy, which has surrounded the Jamaican 4x100-metre team in recent years, Bolt's legacy as a top-tier runner has remained untarnished and his integrity unquestioned. Each time he took to the track, he cemented his legacy as the greatest runner in recent times. And not only was he an incredible athlete, he was also a huge personality known for both his style and substance. The 'Shh' gesture as he crossed the finish line well clear of his opponents and the 'Lightning Bolt' celebration were his signatures – iconic images recognised the world over.

In 2017, he pulled up with a hamstring injury in the 4x100 metres final at the London World Athletics Championships. It would be his last race. He crossed the line with the help of his teammates for one final time before announcing his retirement from the sport. Looking back at his career, Bolt credited his sacrifice and hard work as the foundation of his success.

"I knew this moment would come," he said, signing off in typical style. "I've got mixed feelings about it. I don't have the words to describe my three trebles. I'm going to miss this sport and I'm going to miss the Games because it's the biggest event possible for any athlete. But I've proven that I'm the greatest in this sport and, for me, it's mission accomplished."

Bolt's career was filled with far more ups than downs. He was always a champion, but after the 2016 Olympics he knew his time was near. While his world records will almost certainly be beaten in the future, his legacy will remain intact.

AN UNFORGETTABLE DOPING SCANDAL

The mistake of one can affect an entire team, leaving devastation in its wake

The one glaring mark on Usain Bolt's almost perfect career was not his fault, but would prove very costly for him. During the 2008 Beijing Olympics, there was an incident of doping involving Bolt's teammate, Nesta Carter.

Nearly nine years after the event, in January 2017, the decision came down from the International Olympic Committee – Bolt's gold medal earned for the 2008 4x100-metre relay was taken away due to Carter's violation. Carter was found with the stimulant methylhexaneamine in his system, which had been confirmed in a 2016 investigation.

As a result of Carter's doping, the Jamaican team paid the ultimate price. Bolt, Carter, Asafa Powell and Michael Frater were all forced to return their gold medals. For Bolt this meant his Olympic gold medal haul was reduced from nine to eight and his historic 'triple-triple' would no longer stand. Instead, the gold medals went to the Trinidad & Tobago team, who had finished runners up in 2008.

Usain Bolt was devastated by the loss and went on to condemn doping of all kinds, despite his innocence in the scandal. During a press release after his final race, he said the sport was no place for the illegal use of performance-enhancing drugs. "I've always been strong on doping," he said. "I feel like athletes should get life bans. If you go out of your way to cheat to be a better athlete, I feel you should get life bans, that's a fact."

Jamaica's win in the relay would be taken away from them due to one team member's doping

© Getty Images

Jackie Joyner-Kersee

Meet the six-time Olympic medalist and legend

Olympics competed in: 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996

Words Jessica Leggett

Jackie Joyner-Kersee, voted by *Sports Illustrated* as the greatest female athlete of the 20th century, was born in East St. Louis, Illinois, on 3 March 1962. She was inspired to compete in track and field events after watching the 1975 TV movie *Babe* about Babe Didrikson Zaharis, who is widely considered to be one of the greatest athletes of all time.

Joyner-Kersee played a number of sports in high school and she earned a basketball scholarship to attend the University of California in Los Angeles. In 1981, she began training for the heptathlon at UCLA under the guidance of assistant track coach Bob Kersee, whom she married in 1986.

> "She earned a basketball scholarship to attend the University of California"

Ultimately representing the United States in four consecutive Olympic Games, Joyner-Kersee's Olympic debut was at the 1984 Games in Los Angeles. She entered the competition as the favourite to win the women's heptathlon but in the end, she won the silver medal with a score of 6385, finishing just five points behind Australian Glynis Nunn.

However, Joyner-Kersee made up for this loss at the Seoul 1988 Games, where she won two gold

ABOVE **Joyner-Kersee competing in the women's long jump during the 1984 Olympics**

BELOW Joyner-Kersee is pictured after receiving the gold medal for the women's heptathlon at the Seoul 1998

medals for the long jump and heptathlon, with scores of 7.40 and 7291 respectively. Not only did she become the first African-American to win an Olympic medal in the long jump, but Joyner-Kersee's heptathlon score set a new world record that remains unbroken to this day, over three decades later.

At the Barcelona 1992 Games, she retained her gold for the heptathlon with a score of 7044, thereby becoming the first woman to win back-to-back Olympic gold medals for the event. Joyner-Kersee also earned a bronze medal at the Games for the long jump, with a score of 7.07.

For her final Olympic appearance at the Atlanta 1996 Games, Joyner-Kersee was hampered by an injury to her right hamstring that she had sustained at the Olympic Trials. She had not fully recovered from the injury before the heptathlon began and she was forced to withdraw after the first event, the 100-metre hurdles, due to the pain she was in.

Nevertheless, Joyner-Kersee kept her bronze medal for the long jump - the only event she entered - despite being in seventh place after five rounds. Her last jump, with a score of 7.00, was enough to put her into third place and win her last Olympic medal.

Aside from her Olympic career, Joyner-Kersee also competed in several World Championships, winning four gold medals between 1987 and 1993. She competed four times at the Goodwill Games and at her first appearance, for the 1986 Games in Moscow, she became the first person to score more than 7,000 points in the heptathlon. Joyner-Kersee announced her retirement from track and field events in 1998 and briefly had a career as a professional basketball player in the American Basketball League. In 2000, she attempted to qualify for the long jump events for the Olympic Games in Sydney, but she did not make the team and officially announced her retirement the following year.

USA
Atlanta 1996
3851

ABOVE Joyner-Kersee competing in the women's long jump during her last Olympic Games at Atlanta in 1996

> *"She became the first African-American to win an Olympic medal in the long jump"*

Barcelona '92
Barcelona '92

ABOVE Pictured during the 100-metre hurdles, Joyner-Kersee won the gold medal for the women's heptathlon at the 1992 Games

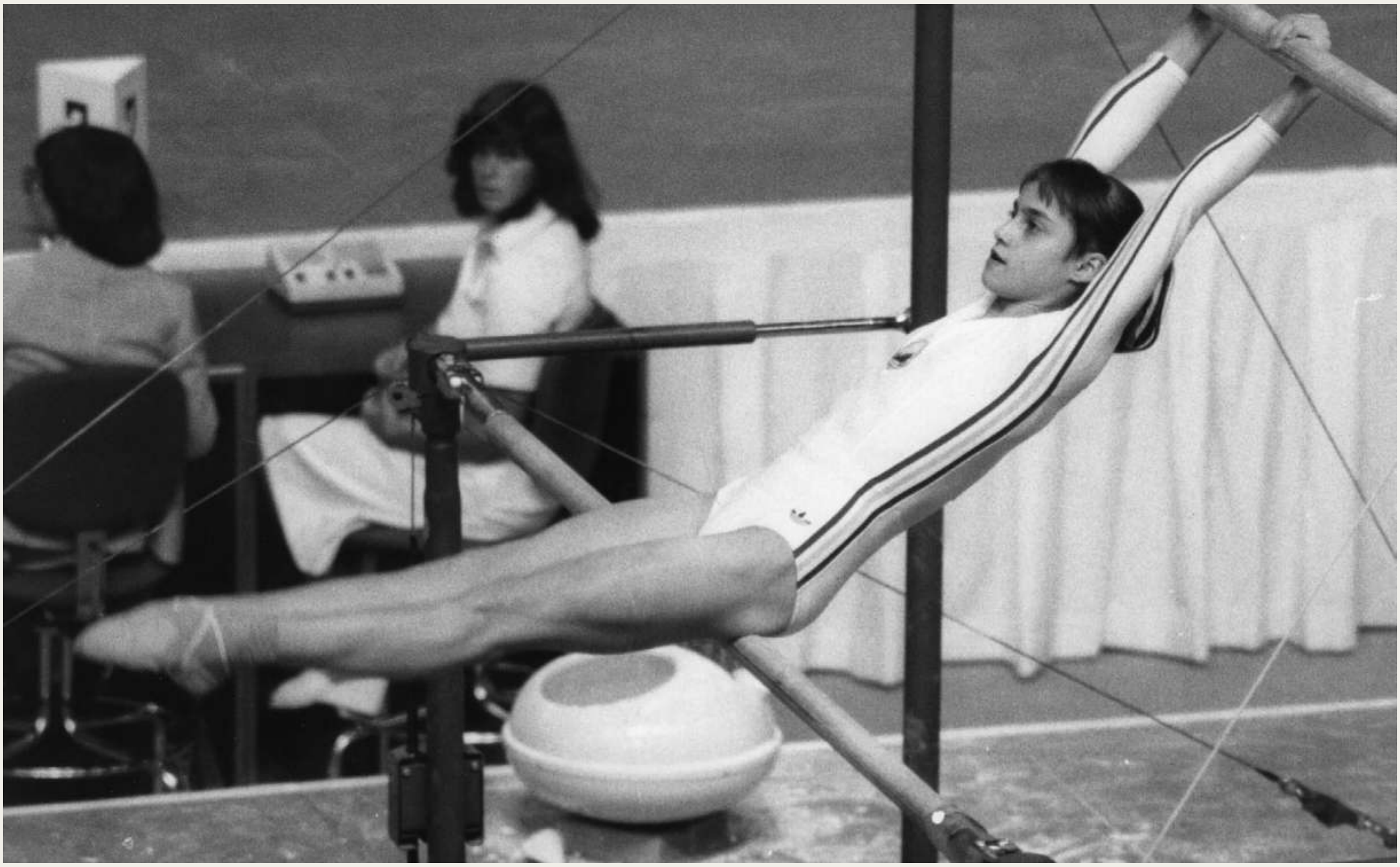
© Getty Images

Nadia Comăneci

The Romanian gymnast who did what no Olympian had done before: score the perfect 10

Olympics competed in: 1976, 1980

Words Dominic Eames



ABOVE Nadia Comăneci performs her legendary uneven bars routine at the Montreal games in 1976

BELOW **The Romanian gymnast celebrates her gold medal**

ABOVE **This multi-exposure shot shows Comăneci during her gold-medal-winning balance beam performance**

Olympians train intensely for years in the hopes that for a moment every four years they will achieve complete perfection, but before Montreal 1976 no one had succeeded. That changed when a 14-year-old girl from Romania stunned the world and brought gymnastics to a whole new audience by being awarded a perfect score of ten.

> "She left Montreal an instant Olympic legend and global superstar"

Nadia Comăneci's 23-second routine on the uneven bars was so unprecedented that the scoreboard could not display '10.00' and had to show it as '1.00'. The young, unflinchingly determined Romanian was not done either.

She received six more perfect scores during those games to add golds in balance beam and all-round, a silver in the team event and bronze on the floor. While her rival, Soviet champion Nellie Kim, picked up three gold medals and her own perfect score, all eyes were fixed on Comăneci. She left Montreal an instant Olympic legend and global superstar.

Although still so young, she was already a multiple junior and senior champion before the Olympics. At the age of six, Comăneci had been discovered by experimental and tough gymnastic coaching pair Bela and Marta Karolyi. Under their management, she won the Romanian Nationals aged nine, took four golds and a silver at her first European Championship in 1975, and triumphed at the inaugural America Cup.

The success kept coming after Montreal as she retained her all-round and uneven bars titles at the Europeans, but the fame, expectation and pressure built too much for her slender frame to bear at times. After being removed from the Karolyis, Comăneci grew so distressed that, aged 15, she attempted suicide by drinking bleach. She survived and continued competing, winning golds at the Worlds before being allowed to reunite with the Karolyis. From there, she won her third European all-round title in 1979, plus golds on the vault and floor and bronze on the balance beam.

Comăneci won further Olympic glory in Moscow in 1980, winning two more golds and two silvers - although she was narrowly defeated in the all-round by less than 0.1 of a point to the Soviet Union's Elena Davydova - but away from gymnastics, she continued to struggle. The Karolyis defected to the United States during a tour, leaving the Romanian government to take over supervision of Comăneci. They monitored her every move and restricted her travel so that she described feeling like a "prisoner".

Then, in 1989, Comăneci defected, sneaking out of Romania and making her way, mostly on foot, through Hungary and Austria. She found her way to the US, where she has lived ever since and taken citizenship. In 1996, she married a fellow Olympic champion, American gymnast Bart Conner. Yet she has still served her country of birth as honorary president of both the Romanian Gymnastics Federation and the Romanian Olympic Committee.

Among her many other honours, Comăneci has twice received the Olympic Order, the highest award the International Olympic Committee can bestow, and was the second person ever inducted into the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame.

ABOVE **Over two Olympics, Comăneci won five golds (including two on the balance beam) two silvers and a bronze**

© Getty Images

Aladár Gerevich

Hungary reigned supreme in Olympic sabre fencing and Aladár Gerevich reigned supreme in the Hungary team

Olympics competed in: 1932, 1936, 1948, 1952, 1956, 1960

Words Dominic Eames

ABOVE At London 1948, Gerevich won gold medals in the individual and team sabres

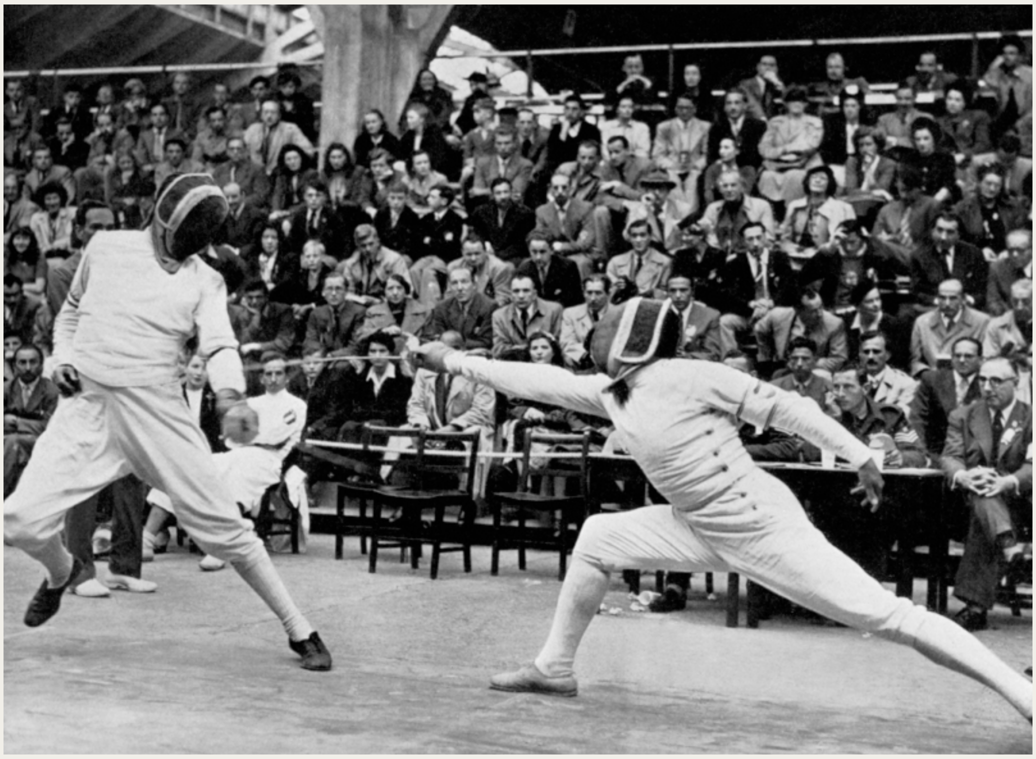
During the preparations for the 1960 Olympics in Rome, the veteran fencer of the Hungarian team, Aladár Gerevich, was told he was now too old to compete. Outraged and confident that he still had another great Olympic performance in him, he challenged every member of the team. He defeated them all and was reinstated right away. Gerevich went to the games and led Hungary to their sixth team sabre gold in a row.

> "It was in the sabre that Gerevich and Hungary excelled"

Dubbed "the greatest Olympic swordsmen ever", Gerevich achieved something that no other athlete of any sport has replicated: he won a gold medal in the same event at six different Olympics. As a constant and leading figure in the Hungarian fencing team from 1932 to 1960, he was the main reason for the country dominating the sabre competition for decades.

What's more is the fact that he could have competed at even more games as two Olympics were cancelled during World War II, at a time when Gerevich was at the prime of his career.

ABOVE **Hungary's Aladar Gerevich in 1932, at the beginning of his 28-year Olympic journey**



ABOVE **Gerevich earned his epithet "the greatest Olympic swordsmen ever" across six games**

The sport of fencing is split by three types of weapon: the lightweight and flexible foil, used to poke or jab at the opponent's torso with the tip to score points; the heavier épée, which also only scores with hits with the blade tip; and the cut-and-slash sabre. At the Olympics, each type has an individual and team event. It was in the sabre that Gerevich and Hungary excelled. At Los Angeles 1932, at the age of 22, he helped the sabre team defend their title from 1928, while his compatriot Gyorgy Piller claimed the individual gold.

Gerevich was the rising star of Hungarian fencing, though. In 1932, he won his first World Championship, and at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, he again helped the sabre team towards the gold having lost only two of his matches.

He also claimed his first individual medal, a bronze. Fencing would actually become something of a family business as his wife Erna Bogen, son Pal and father-in-law Albert all ended up Olympic medallists.

With World War II over, the Olympics could return at London 1948 and so did Gerevich - and he was better than ever. The run of sabre team golds went on uninterrupted while Gerevich got his hand on the individual gold after triumphing in 19 of his 20 matches. He therefore joined the unbroken run of a Hungarian winning the men's individual sabre competition at every Olympics from 1924 to 1964.

ABOVE **The Hungary sabre team celebrate another gold in 1960: Gerevich's seventh**

The 1950s brought him a complete set of medals at Helsinki 1952 as he added an individual sabre silver and bronze in the team foil, and two more World Championships. And, of course, more golds for the sabre team, the last coming in Rome in 1960. In all, Gerevich won seven Olympic gold medals, one silver and two bronzes over his six games. He would hold the record for most years between an Olympian's first and last medal, at 28 years, until New Zealand equestrian Mark Todd finally caught him up in 2012.

© Alamy, Getty Images

Simone Biles

This record-breaking gymnast continues to make history

Olympics competed in: 2016, 2021

Words Dominic Eames

Widely considered to be the greatest gymnast of all time, Simone Biles has already been hailed as an Olympic champion, even though she has only appeared in two of the Games so far.

Biles was six years old when she visited Bannon's Gymnastix in Houston, Texas, as part of a daycare field trip. As she watched the gymnasts and tried to imitate their movements, the coach noticed and realised that she had an aptitude for the sport.

He subsequently sent a letter to her grandparents, encouraging them to let her enrol in gymnastic classes. By the time she was eight years old, Biles was training with Aimee Boorman, who coached her for her first Olympic appearance.

At the age of 14, Biles began her elite career as a junior gymnast, moving up to a senior in 2013. That year, she took part in the World Championships in Antwerp, Belgium, her first appearance at the competition. She won the gold medal for both the all-around and floor exercise, becoming the first African-American to win the former. Despite aggravating a shoulder injury in 2014, Biles won another four gold medals at the World Championships in Nanning, China, and she held on to them again in Glasgow in 2015.

Biles was 15 years old when she was inspired to train for the Olympic Games, after watching the American female gymnastics team win the team all-around gold at London 2012. Four years later, she made her Olympic debut at the Rio 2016 Games, competing in artistic gymnastics.

The competition kicked off with Biles scoring 15.800 points for her samba-inspired floor routine, helping Team USA retain their gold medal for the team all-around. Two days later, she won the gold for the individual all-around as well as the gold medal for the vault after scoring a remarkable 15.966 - a score she also achieved for the floor exercise, earning Biles her staggering fourth gold of the Games.

Biles was the most decorated female athlete at Rio - alongside American swimmer Katie Ledecky - winning five medals in total. With her four golds, Biles set the American record for the most gold medals in women's gymnastics at a single Games.

ABOVE Performing her routine for the balance beam final at the 2016 Games, Biles walked away with the bronze medal

BELOW Biles with her teammates after winning the gold medal for the team all-around at the Rio 2016 Olympics

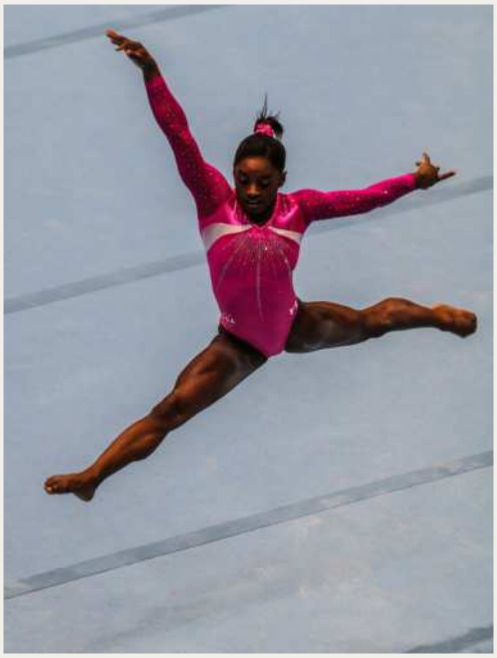
She also became the fifth female gymnast to do this, and the first to achieve this feat since 1984.

In response to her exceptional success, Biles stated: “My first Olympics and I’ve walked away with five medals: that’s not disappointing at all. It shows dreams can come true. I’m not the next Usain Bolt or Michael Phelps: I’m the first Simone Biles.”

Biles’ second Olympics in Tokyo was hit by tragedy. She withdrew from several events citing mental health concerns, and with that huge burden of pressure and expectation placed on her shoulders, it’s understandable. She competed in the beam final and won bronze, revealing her aunt had passed away two days prior. Biles stated that bronze was amongst her most meaningful medals, as she felt it symbolised her focus on mental health and her perseverance.

> “I’m not the next Usain Bolt or Michael Phelps: I’m the first Simone Biles“

BELOW There was an impossibly heavy burden of expectation on Biles’ shoulders for Tokyo 2020



ABOVE Biles during her floor exercise for the women’s all-around final at the 2013 World Championships

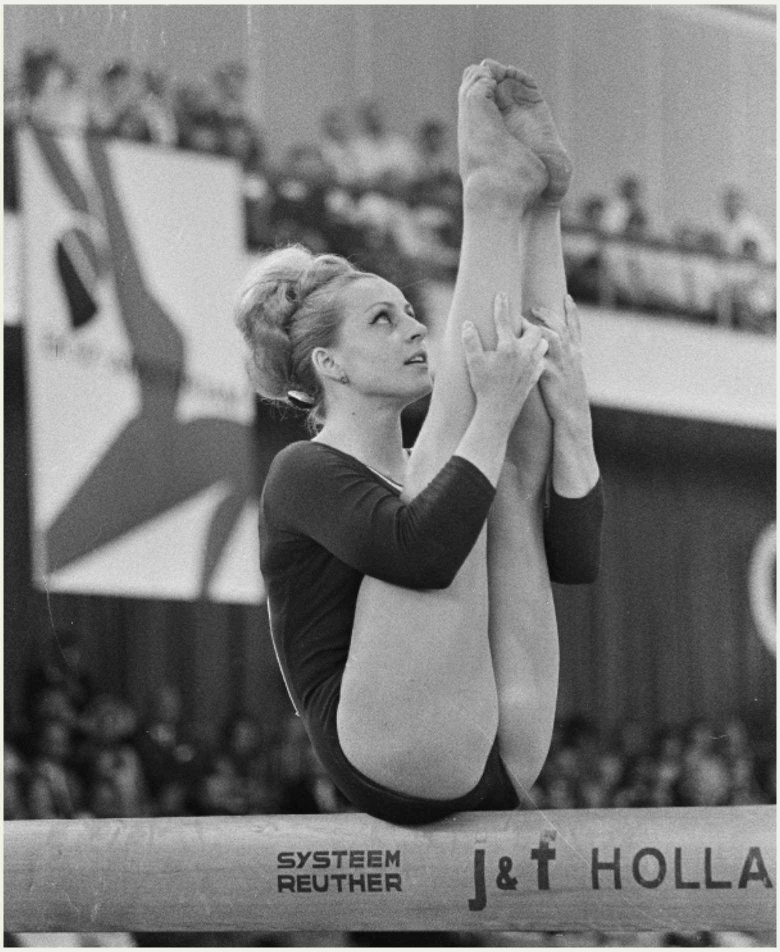
© Getty Images

Věra Čáslavská

The Czechoslovakian gymnast won seven Olympic golds, but will always be remembered for her actions off the floor, beams and bars too

Olympics competed in: 1960, 1964, 1968

Words Dominic Eames



ABOVE **It was not just the balance beam that Čáslavská took gold in the 1967 Europeans; she won all five events**

BELOW **Čáslavská shows off her four gold medals from 1968; she also left Mexico City with two silvers and a husband**

Standing on the podium being awarded the gold medal for the floor exercise at Mexico City in 1968, Věra Čáslavská carried out a subtle, yet powerful, act of protest. As the Soviet anthem played, the Czechoslovakian gymnast turned her head away and down. Controversial scoring decisions had meant she shared this gold with Soviet Larisa Petrick and had robbed her of winning the balance beam, but her protest meant much more than that. She was displaying her anger at the Soviet Union, which had sent tanks into her country earlier that year. It was a moment that encapsulated Čáslavská's legacy: Olympic champion and passionate activist.

From the beginning of her international gymnastic career in 1958, Čáslavská picked up medals at the European and World Championships, and, at the 1960 Olympics in Rome, the team silver. Then at the Tokyo 1964, aged 22, she reached a higher level by claiming gold in the balance beam, vault and all-round, plus another team silver. She followed up those Olympics by winning all ten events at the 1965 and 1967 Europeans, and three golds and two silvers at the 1966 Worlds. Čáslavská seemed destined to set the Mexico City Games alight.

But then, in 1968, came the Prague Spring, a period of political unrest and liberalisation in Czechoslovakia. She risked her gymnastics career and freedom by signing the radical manifesto, 'Two Thousand Words', which called for open democracy and rejection of Soviet interference. When tanks rolled into her hometown of Prague, Čáslavská faced arrest.

> **"She practiced her floor routine in a meadow and the beam on a log"**

Fleeing to the mountains, she spent the weeks before the Olympics, during which she did not know if she would even be able to go, keeping fit by swinging from tree branches, lifting sacks of potatoes and shovelling coal to build callouses on her hands. She practiced her floor routine in a meadow and the beam on a log. Just weeks before the opening ceremony, she was given permission to travel to Mexico City.

The poor preparation and fears for her safety did not seem to hinder Čáslavská, however. Perhaps facing off against her Soviet rivals with added intensity, she defended her all-around and vault titles, won gold on the floor - performing to the Mexican hat dance, to the delight of the crowds - and uneven bars, and silvers in balance beam and, yet again, the team event. She would become the only gymnast, male or female, to win a gold in every individual event.

The combination of her victories, strength of her political convictions and much-publicised wedding to fellow athlete Josef Odložil made Čáslavská a star of the Games, but Mexico City marked the end of her career. Čáslavská was now out of favour with the authorities so was denied the right to travel and struggled to find any employment, let alone in gymnastics. It would not effectively be until the fall of the Soviet Union that her reputation was redeemed, becoming president of the Czechoslovakian Olympic Committee and joining the International Olympic Committee in 1995.

ABOVE **When Soviet tanks roll into Prague in 1968, Čáslavská's Olympic hopes and freedom are under threat**

ABOVE **At Mexico City 1968, Čáslavská leaps to gold in the vault**

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Alice Coachman

Coachman was a remarkable athlete who broke down racial barriers

Olympics competed in: 1948

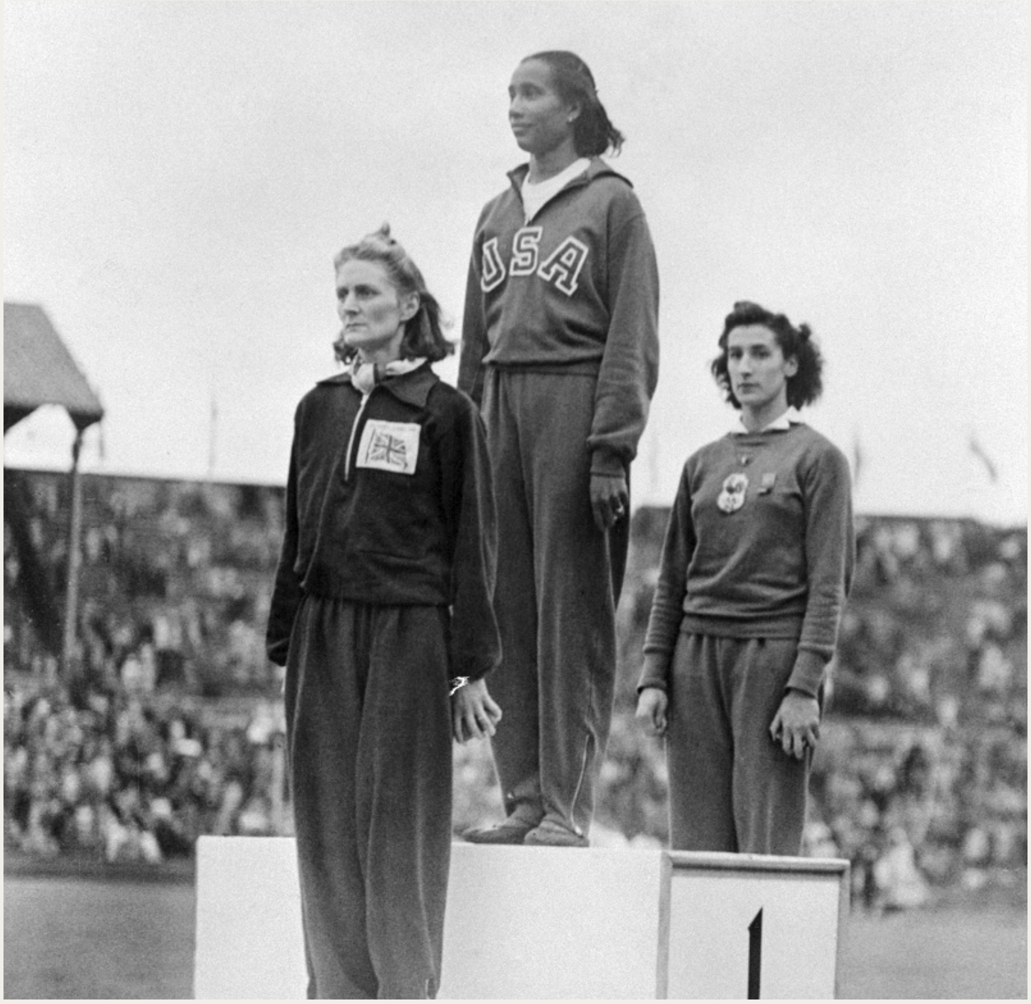
Words Jessica Leggett

Alice Coachman, a former track and field athlete who specialised in the high jump, was born in Albany, Georgia, in 1923. Born at a time when segregation was still occurring in America, she was frequently barred from competing in organised sporting events and denied access to training facilities. The fact that she was a woman was also a barrier to her training, as there was opposition to women in sports at the time.

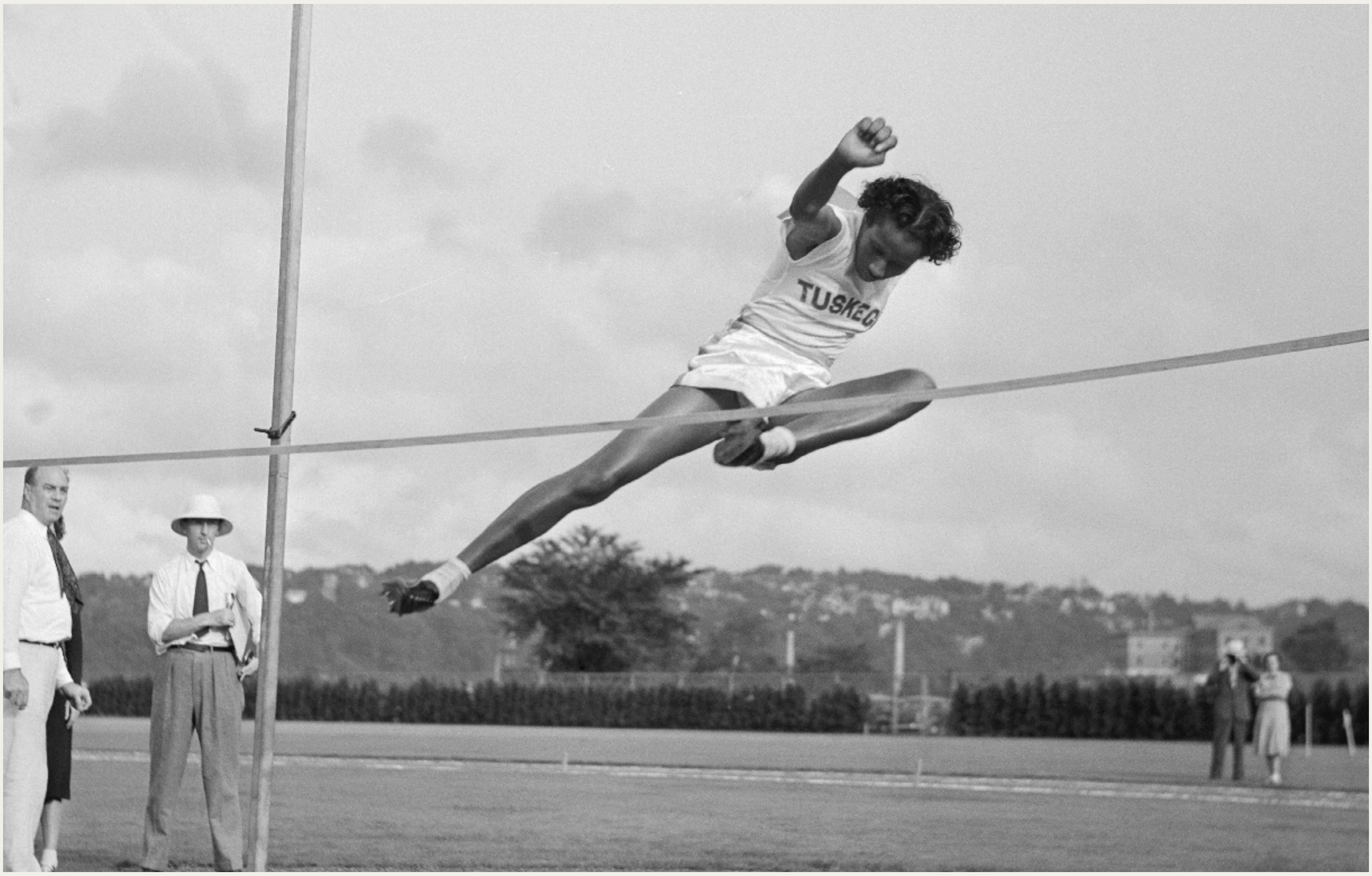
Left to improvise her own training, Coachman used homemade equipment consisting of ropes and sticks to practice her high jump, and she would run barefoot on dirt roads to build up her stamina. In 1939, a 16-year-old Coachman competed in the Amateur Athletic Union National Championships and broke both the high school and college national high jump records, all while barefoot. She went on to win the high jump event for the next nine years, winning a stunning total of ten National Championships in a row from 1939 to 1948.

Coachman attended the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama after winning a scholarship. Although she was known for competing in the high jump, she also won both the 50- and 100-metre dashes and the 4x100-metre relay at the National Championships while a student at the Institute. During this time, Coachman was the guard on the Tuskegee women's basketball team, winning three conference championships with them.

Since the 1940 and 1944 Olympic Games were cancelled due to World War II, Coachman's



ABOVE **Coachman stands victorious on the high jump podium after winning gold**



ABOVE Coachman's winning jump in the high jump event at the National Women's Track and Field meet

Olympic – as well as international – debut was at the 1948 Games in London. Achieving a record-breaking score of 1.68 metres on her first high jump attempt, Coachman made history by becoming the first Black woman to win an Olympic gold medal. She defeated Britain's Dorothy Tyler who also achieved the same score, but on her second attempt, earning her silver.

> “ Coachman made history by becoming the first black woman to win an Olympic gold medal“

Coachman was the only female American athlete to win a gold medal at the 1948 Games. The medal was presented to her by King George VI and, thanks to her success, she returned home to the United States as a hero. Coachman met President Harry Truman and former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, with parades thrown in her honour across the nation – although segregation remained in full swing. Following the 1948 Games, Coachman retired at the age of 24 in order to raise a family and become a schoolteacher.

ABOVE Harry Truman meets African-American athletes, including Coachman (second from the right) in the Oval Office

Even so, she became the first Black female athlete to endorse an international consumer product when she was signed as a spokesperson by Coca-Cola in 1952. Coachman was subsequently featured in billboard campaigns alongside Jesse Owens, the track and field athlete who had won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympic Games. Inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame, it has often been wondered what Coachman could have achieved had the 1940 and 1944 Olympic Games gone ahead. Although she passed away in July 2014 at the age of 90, Coachman's sporting career undoubtedly continues to inspire many young women to follow in her footsteps.

ABOVE Coachman speaks to sports broadcaster Jon Naber in the 100-day lead-up to London 2012

© Getty Images

Sawao Katō

Winner of eight gold medals, the gymnast who thrived at three games remains Japan's greatest Olympian

Olympics competed in: 1968, 1972, 1976

Words Dominic Eames

ABOVE **Eizo Kenmotsu, Sawao Katō and Akinori Nakayama complete a Japanese clean sweep in the all-round in Munich 1972**

No Japanese Olympian, and no male gymnast of any nationality, to date has won more gold medals than Sawao Katō. Japan dominated men's gymnastics in the 1960s and '70s with him as their stalwart captain, fixed with a look of steely concentration during his sublimely executed routines. Across three Games, Katō won eight golds - only a handful of athletes of any sport have achieved more - and 12 medals overall.

Praised for his self-discipline, the five-foot-four-inch Kato blended technical precision and form with creative flair and originality to reshape men's gymnastics. Among his innovations was the use of trampolines during training sessions. And it immediately paid off at his inaugural Olympics, Mexico City 1968, as he took the gold in the floor exercise, team event and all-round, as well as bronze on the rings. What makes his games more impressive was that the 21-year-old faced Soviet master Mikhail Voronin, winner of seven medals, and struggled the whole time with a niggle in his Achilles tendon.

Also competing in Mexico City was his elder brother, Takeshi, who picked up the bronze on the floor and was part of the gold-medal-winning team. The brothers were two of five children growing up in the Niigata prefecture of Japan during the years following World War II. Academically gifted and a keen sportsman during his youth, Katō committed to gymnastics and started training with Takeshi under the coaching leadership of former Olympian Akitomo Kaneko.

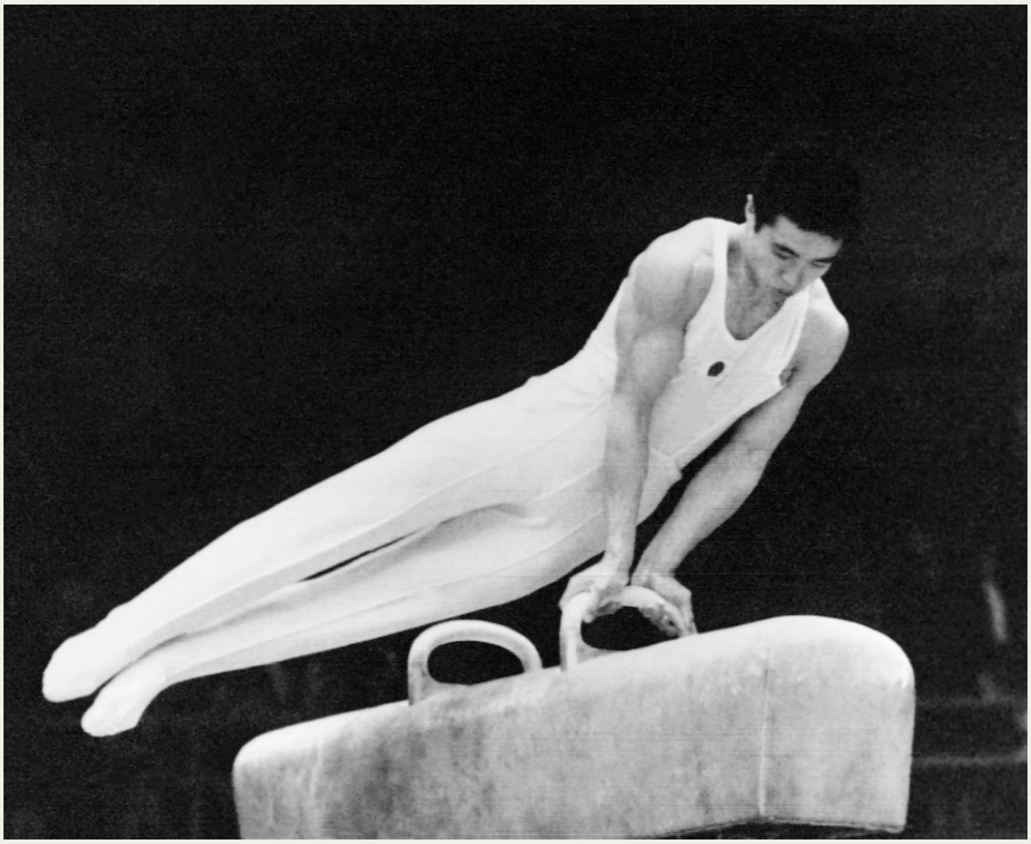
BELOW Self-discipline and style blended perfectly to make Katō, seen on the horizontal bar, a champion

At the next games in Munich 1972, Katō, and the Japanese team, got even better. He became the third gymnast in history to retain the men's all-round title and his compatriots completed the medal clean sweep – the first time this had happened since 1900. Katō also won the gold on the parallel bars, and silver on pommel horse and horizontal bar. The Soviets offered fierce competition, including the immensely talented multiple title holder from the European and World Championships Nikolai Andrianov, but Japan reigned supreme. They stormed to the team gold and, in all, picked up 16 of the available 24 medals.

Katō and Andrianov met again four years later, at Montreal 1976. The Japanese team won their fifth gold in a row and Katō defended his parallel bars title to add to his personal golden haul. But the Soviet pipped him to the all-round by a single point. Andrianov had a blistering games, adding another three golds, two silvers and a bronze. While he would go on to beat Katō's tally with 15 medals, the Japanese maestro ended his career with more golds than any male gymnast ever.

> "Academically gifted and a keen sportsman"

In honour of his achievements, Katō was inducted into the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame in 2001. After retiring, he went on to coach before embarking upon a different kind of challenge within the sport: as a judge at competitions. Following a long and prodigious career giving the scores, rather than earning them, his position as a gymnastic legend is assured. In his home country, there is now an annual competition called the Sawao Cup.



ABOVE Katō's pommel horse routine helped him win the all-round gold in Mexico City; he also won the individual floor title

ABOVE Katō (third from right) and the Japan team celebrate their fifth gold medal in a row at Montreal 1976

© Getty Images

Larisa Latynina

Gymnastics was utterly dominated by the Soviets, but one stood above all other to become the most decorated female Olympian of all time

Olympics competed in: 1956, 1960, 1964

Words Dominic Eames

When Larisa Latynina walked away from her third and final Olympics in 1964, her final total of 18 medals was the largest haul any athlete had ever achieved, and she would hold on to that record for 48 years.

The Soviet gymnast won nine gold medals - still the most of any female Olympian - plus five silver and four bronze. In fact, Latynina took a medal in every event she participated in, with just one exception, across three Games.

Add her successes at both the World and European Championships and Latynina won 46 medals during a sensational career. That all began at the 1954 Worlds, where she was part of a gold-medal-winning team.

It had been evident from an early age that Latynina, born in Soviet Ukraine, possessed the grace, strength and skill to be an elite athlete, but as a young girl she had wanted to be a ballerina. It was only when the local dance studio closed that she turned, with consummate ease, to gymnastics.

At the age of 21, Latynina competed in her first Olympics at Melbourne 1956 and immediately looked at home on the big occasion. As well as a silver and bronze, she won gold medals in the vault, team competition and prestigious all-round, and shared the floor exercise title with her fierce rival, the older and more experienced Agnes Keleti. The Hungarian took four golds - including in the balance beam, the only event in which Latynina failed to get a medal - and two silvers.

ABOVE **Latynina on the balance beam at her third Olympics in Tokyo 1964**

Her immense form continued into the Europeans in 1957, topping all five individual events, and Worlds the next year, where she won five of six titles while four months pregnant. She kept that secret from everybody, even her coach. Latynina had two children while competing, but never looked like slowing down.

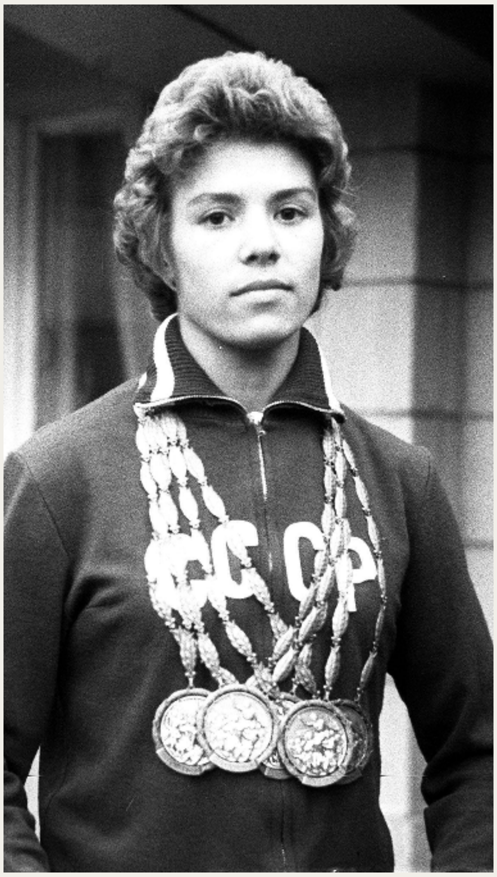
At the Rome Olympics in 1960, she again won gold in the floor, team and all-round competitions, silver in balance beam and uneven bars and bronze in the vault. Thanks in no small part to Latynina's leadership, the Soviet women were untouchable that year, claiming 15 of the 18 gymnastics medals.

At her third Olympics, Tokyo 1964, the now-veteran Latynina continued the trend of winning six medals at every Games, including her third floor and team golds in a row.

Despite losing the all-round title to young talent Věra Čáslavská of Czechoslovakia, she made sure to remind the next generation of her still imperious quality by posting the highest score for the Soviets in their team victory.

Following her retirement, Latynina remained a prominent figure in gymnastics as a teacher and national coach for over a decade, during which the Soviet women won three more team golds, and as a key organiser for the 1980 games in Moscow.

Until 2012, her record total of 18 Olympic medals remained unchallenged, but American swimmer Michael Phelps finally overtook her. And as he claimed his 19th medal to become the most decorated Olympian in history - although Latynina still held the female title - Latynina, the gymnastic genius, was up in the stands applauding his achievement.

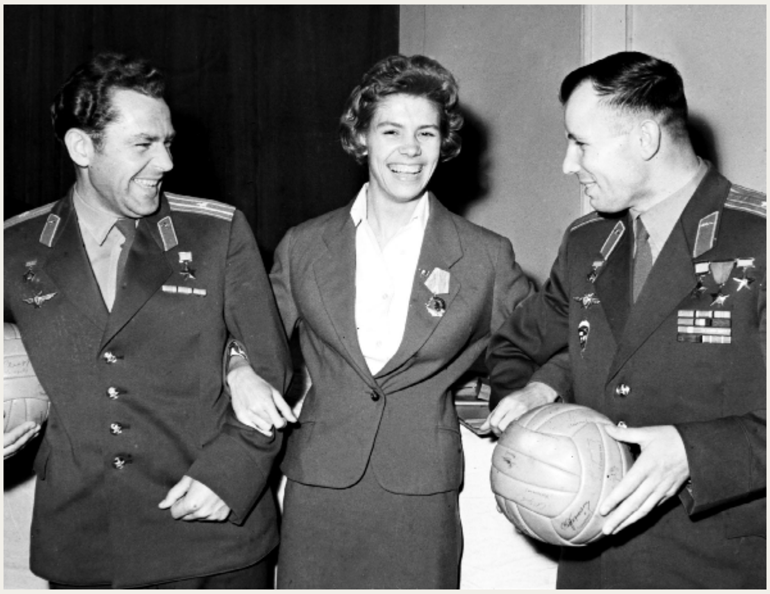


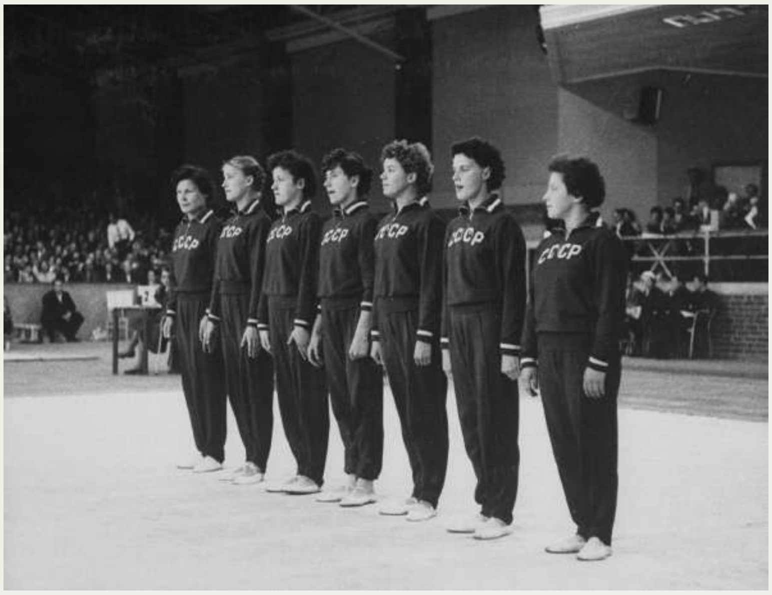
ABOVE **Three golds, two silvers and a bronze: the medal haul at Rome in 1960**

> “The now-veteran Latynina continued the trend of winning six medals at every Games“

BELOW **With 18 Olympics medals, Latynina helped the Soviets dominate women's gymnastics**

BELOW **Latynina with fellow Soviet superstars, cosmonauts Gherman Titov and Yuri Gagarin**





ABOVE **Larisa Latynina, 3rd from right, standing with her teammates at the 1956 Olympics**

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Sky Brown

At just 13 years old, the sky was the limit for this skateboarding sensation as she captured hearts in her first Olympics

Olympics competed in: 2021

Words Dominic Eames

One of the defining images of the delayed Olympic Games in Tokyo may just end up being the ear-to-ear grin of a 13-year-old girl. Sky Brown is one of the top female skateboarders in the world. She qualified to represent Great Britain in the Games held in 2021, making history as the youngest British Summer Olympian.

The Tokyo Games - originally scheduled for 2020, but postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic saw skateboarding included for the first time. It featured two types of event. Park, which Brown competed in, looks like a typical skate park with a hollowed-out course where competitors skate up the sides and perform tricks in the air. Street is designed to look like an urban street, a playground for skateboarders as they can do tricks off rails, curbs, benches, stairs, walls and slopes.

Born 12 July 2008, Brown took up skateboarding at the age of three. Far from a strict training regime, she has no coach and just spends her time at a local skate park or learning new tricks from YouTube. She is also on the way to becoming a world-beating surfer too as she wakes up at dawn most mornings to head to the beaches of either Japan or California. Her mother is Japanese and her father is British, which is how she qualifies for Team GB.

At the age of eight, in September 2016, the diminutive wunderkind became the youngest competitor in the Vans US Open Pro Series. Brown is not just there to fill the numbers: she has won the annual event Simple Session in 2019, beating

BELOW **Brown competes at the X Games in 2019, where she makes history landing a frontside 540**

BELOW **A jubilant Brown celebrates with her mother after coming third in the World Championships**

TOKYO 2020
PRO-TEC

ABOVE **Sky Brown almost didn't make it to the Tokyo games after badly injuring herself in 2020 but she made a full recovery**

adults more than twice her size, and a World Championship bronze. She was also the first female skateboarder to land a frontside 540 at the X Games. At her highest, Brown has ranked third in the world, all but guaranteeing her a spot at the Olympics.

But Brown's chances were nearly ended in 2020 after she suffered horrific injuries while training. She lost control at the top of a ramp and plummeted 15 feet to the ground, resulting in multiple fractures to the skull, lacerations of the lungs and stomach, and a broken arm and wrist. Brown was initially unresponsive when rushed to the hospital, but a couple of weeks later she was back on her skateboard. "Even if I fall really hard, I just get back up and try it again," she has often said, and it is an attitude that has undoubtedly aided her recovery. Despite the injuries, Brown planned to compete in the Olympics. If anything, the delay helped and gave her the time needed to recover.

In Tokyo, Brown became the youngest medal winner for Great Britain, netting a bronze for her efforts in the women's park skateboarding event. She fell during her first two runs, however, for her final attempt, she nailed her routine and scored 56.47 from the judges. Following her Olympic success, Brown won the BBC Sports Personality of the Year award, signalling that her infectious enthusiasm captured the hearts of the UK.

GREAT BRITAIN

ABOVE **Brown earned a bronze for her showing in Tokyo, and won the hearts of the UK in the process**

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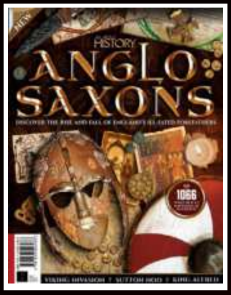
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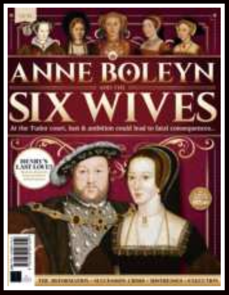
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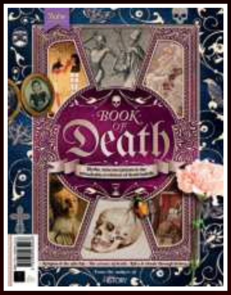
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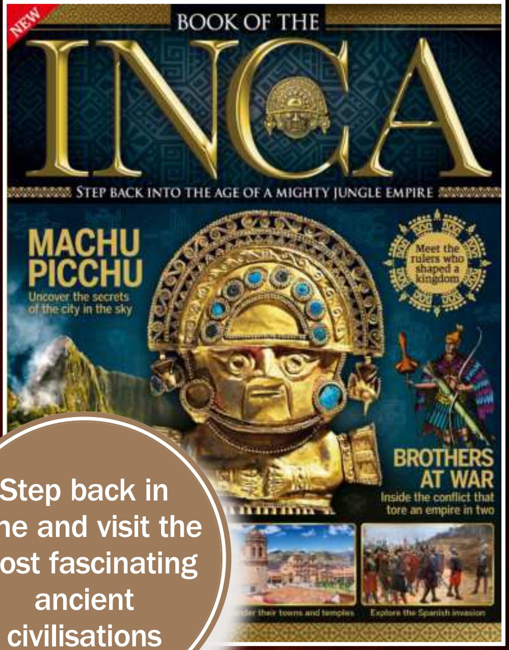
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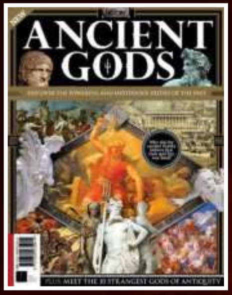
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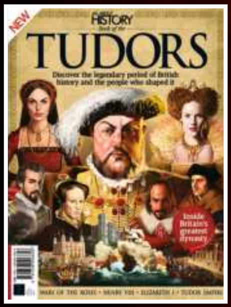
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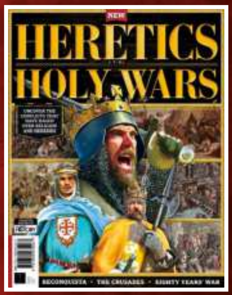
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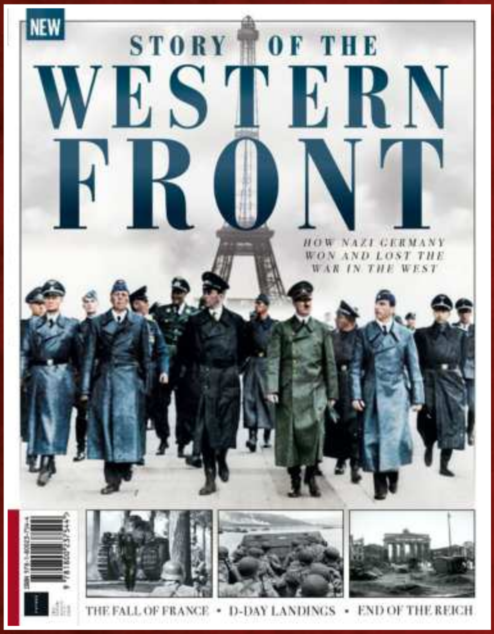
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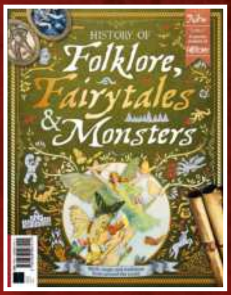
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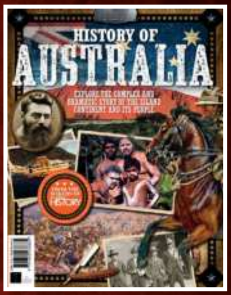
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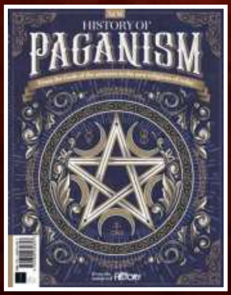
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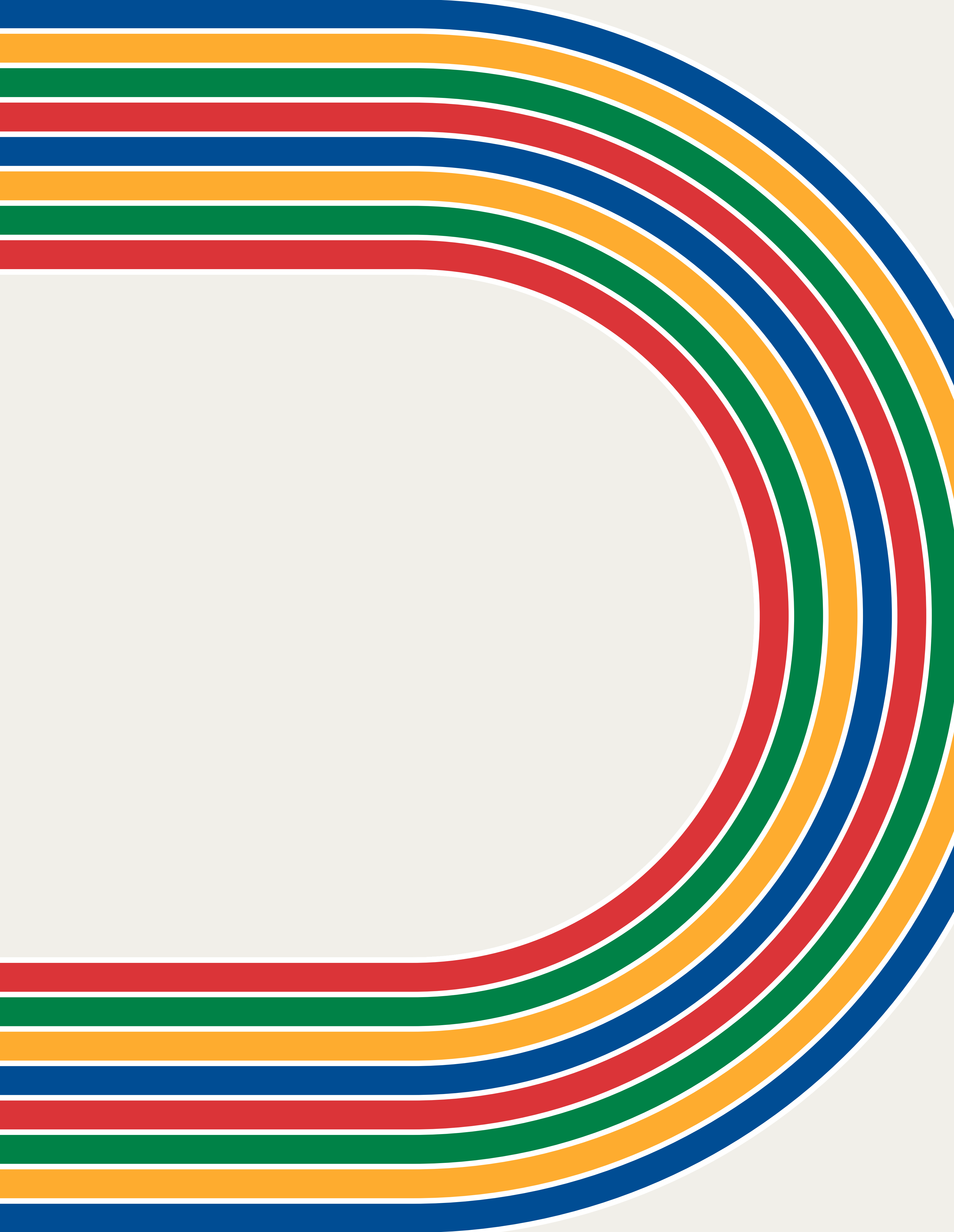

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